

SOCIAL LIFE  
— IN THE —  
CAPE COLONY  
IN THE 18th CENTURY

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C GRAHAM EOTHA

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*BY THE SAME AUTHOR*

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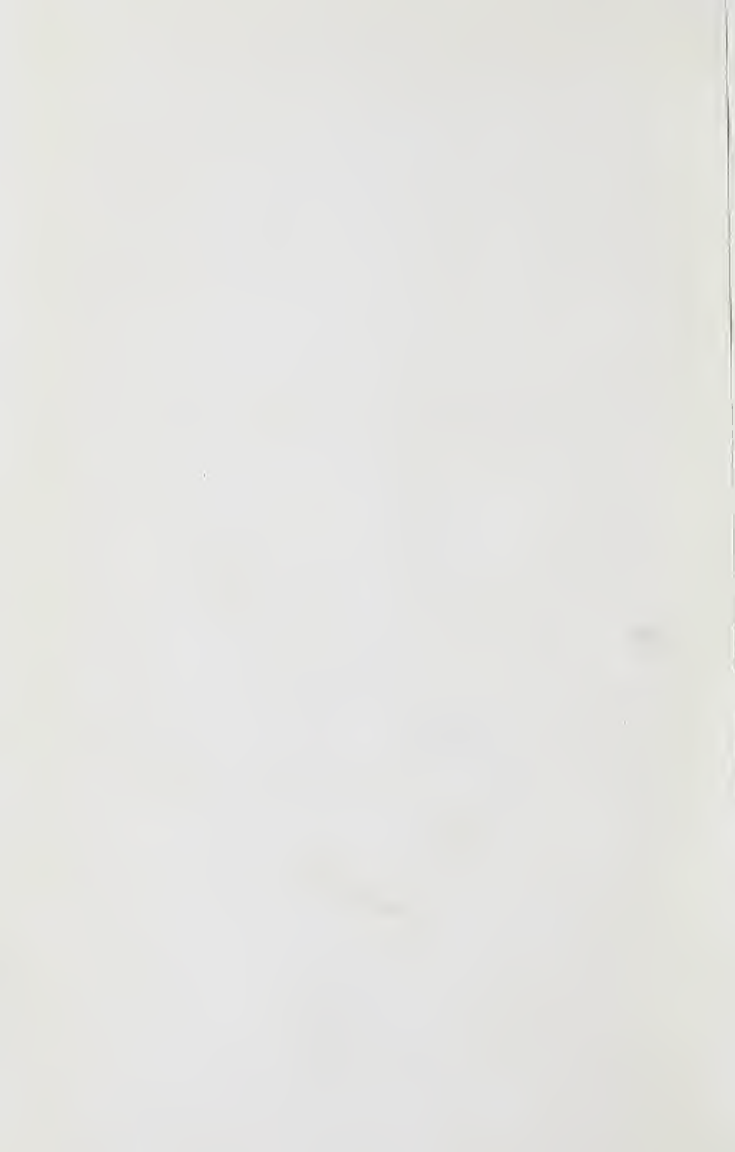
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SOCIAL LIFE *in*  
*the* CAPE COLONY  
*In the 18th Century*

BY

COLIN GRAHAM BOTHA  
*(Chief Archivist for the Union)*



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BOTHA





DEDICATED  
TO THE MEMORY  
OF THOSE  
BRAVE AND GOD- FEARING PIONEERS  
WHO PUSHED THEIR WAY INTO  
THE UNKNOWN OF SOUTH AFRICA  
AS WELL AS  
TO THOSE WHO  
LOVE ITS HISTORY AND TRADITIONS.

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## PREFACE.

The following pages only claim to give a general survey of the life of the Cape colonists during the eighteenth century. A social history of that period, in the academic sense, has still to be written. To understand the history of the Cape Colony we should have a knowledge of the colonists themselves, their life, manners and customs, as they were actors in the drama of South Africa. Details of their social life will be found scattered throughout the pages of many volumes by travellers, and an effort has now been made to summarise these and add to them what can be found in the official records.

The sources from which this book has been drawn are mainly the books of early travellers and the archives of the Cape Colony. The first are invaluable for the purpose of obtaining a broad view of the life of the people. Some of the authors do not appear to have come in close contact with all sections of the community while others have given an intimate account of only a small section. Some have written of the colonists with a certain amount of prejudice and misunderstanding which have rather obscured their vision; they have been inclined to judge some of the people, particularly the country population, by too high a standard. Others have commented fairly on what they observed and experienced. All these writers have been taken on their merits and their statements, where possible, compared with the official records.

Various classes of the Cape Archives have produced a vast amount of information. Their value cannot be overestimated, and no class can be entirely ignored as from the most unlikely documents material has been obtained. The resolutions and annexures of the Council

of Policy, the journal, the proclamations and government advertisements, petitions, the Orphan Chamber records, the early district archives, have all been drawn upon while even civil and criminal cases of the courts of justice and their supporting papers have disclosed many interesting facts.

In writing this book I have endeavoured, as far as possible, to avoid too much detail in any one section. My object has been rather to give a brief and general review of the life of the Europeans at the Cape. It does not pretend to be more than an outline on the subject, and as such must be judged.

C. GRAHAM BOTHA.

Cape Town,  
December, 1926.

## INTRODUCTION.

The object of the Dutch East India Company in establishing a station at the Cape of Good Hope in 1652 was but a means to an end. It desired a place where its ships, sailing to and from the East Indies, could obtain refreshments, and where the seamen could recuperate after a long voyage. The Cape was thus merely a half-way house and was rightly called "The Tavern of the Indian Ocean." There was no idea at first of making the place a colony where men and women from Holland could settle and build up a strong colonial possession. This was, however, modified in course of time, and for some years immigrants were sent out so that by the beginning of the eighteenth century the Cape had become a flourishing agricultural colony. The victualling station grew to a colony which was different from the other colonies. The latter were entirely commercial whereas the Cape was primarily an agricultural colony. It contained a proportionately large number of so-called "free citizens," though the government remained entirely in the hands of the Dutch East India Company.

It was not a trade colony, but was only looked upon as a place indispensable for supplying the ships with meat, grain and wine. Though the Company desired to have a strong citizen population yet it maintained, throughout its régime, a monopoly on all its internal trade. The peace and harmony which should have existed between its officials and the colonists were disturbed. The restrictive trade regulations retarded the progress of the country and caused the colonists to make bitter complaints to the authorities in Holland. In 1795 the British took the Cape when a new régime began, but it had little influence on the life of the people in general.

During the eighteenth century there were two elements of the European population in the Colony, namely, the officials, civil and military, of the Company, and the Cape colonists. It is to the life of the latter that I desire to devote the following pages. In 1657 a few of the Company's men were given their discharge and granted plots of land along the Liesbeek to cultivate. These were the first South African farmers and they were the nucleus of the South African people. They were called Freeman or Freeburghers to distinguish them from the Company's servants. As time went on more men received their discharge, and their wives were sent out from Europe.

Up to about 1679 little headway was made with regard to colonisation. Then followed a period of immigration, when men and women were sought in Holland to come to the Cape and settle. Amongst the most notable batches which came out were the French Refugees who arrived between 1688 and 1700. They were settled along the Berg River between the present Fransche Hoek and Wellington. After the first decade of the eighteenth century immigration practically stopped, and the increase of the colonists was due to the excess of births over deaths and the discharge of Company's servants who were permitted to remain in the country as colonists. Up to this time the period may be looked upon as one of settlement, after which it was the period of dispersion, for the farmers were then beginning to push their way into the interior. The multiplicity of births of children of the burghers was an important factor in the increase of the population, and many sons chose to become farmers rather than enter the service of the Company.

The second generation of the colonists can be looked upon as South Africans, the blood of their parents was a mixture of Dutch, French and German. In 1795 the proportion of blood was probably about seven-twelfths Dutch, one-sixth French, one-sixth German, and one-



twelfth of other nationalities. This mixture of blood, says Dr. Theal, had helped to wean the colonists from attachment to the parent state, but the condition in which they lived was at least of equal importance in this respect. Most of the Germans arrived late in the eighteenth century; the majority came from Westphalia and the border-land, and were somewhat similar in race, character and language to the Dutch. They generally professed the Dutch Reformed religion and were in the service of the Company. Being of a roving disposition they settled down late in life and married women not of their own nationality. Under these circumstances they were easily absorbed by the Dutch population and it is difficult to trace any special influence on the character of the people. The same can be said of the French Refugees whose number was relatively small. They were made to reside interspersed amongst the Dutch population, and the use of their language was, after a while, prohibited. They soon became assimilated with the Dutch.

The men and women who came out from time to time were a sturdy lot. The long and perilous voyage of those days was their first experience of troubles and trials. It was no mean undertaking to sail from Holland with the prospect of three, four or even six months of life at sea. A few weeks after sailing the hand of death made itself felt amongst the crew and passengers who were stricken down with scurvy. Neither rich nor poor, healthy nor weak, escaped. It frequently happened that only a handful of the crew were able to guide the ship into harbour. Pirates constantly infested the sea route, and attacked the Company's ships. The records abound with tales of exciting conflicts with the sea robbers.

Although some of the settlers were bred to agriculture they experienced many hardships and difficulties because the climatic conditions, the mode of life, the seasons and the soil were all so different from those to which they

had been accustomed. These added to their trials, but by grit and perseverance they overcame them and in course of time there sprang up a steady and well conducted community. There was born a healthy, virile and sturdy stock of men and women who were a simple and honest type and laid the foundation for those who followed in the next century.

Towards the end of the seventeenth century the Dutch East India Company ceased to supply its shipping with meat, corn and wine, and looked to the burgher community to supply these commodities. But the trade restrictions pressed very heavily on the colonists who could only sell at fixed prices; this caused dissatisfaction. At this time the cattle trade was open to the burghers who were allowed to barter with the natives. This encouraged the farmer to press into the interior and, with the dissatisfaction which he felt, the desire for solitude and aversion to town life, he began to trek away from the west. Thus began a new era in South African history. Now cattle breeding became the chief occupation of a large portion of the community. It could be undertaken at a less expense and with less anxiety than agriculture. Men and women now began to push forward, some moving from one grazing ground to another in quick succession, others remaining in one locality perhaps a generation or so. The form of land tenure rather encouraged this advancement. These farmers were adapting themselves to this life and some of them lived really as nomads. They subsisted a good deal on the meat of the game they shot, and later on, when their sheep had increased, they ate mostly mutton.

The absence of restraint by the government officials, the avarice of the tradesmen and speculators in the town, made them keep away from the capital. They loved the open, healthy, unrestrained and careless life. They were going through a hard school of training and acquired tastes and habits which were transmitted to

their descendants, the frontiersmen of the Colony. But the authorities were averse to this movement as they desired the people to live close to headquarters so as to prevent illicit cattle bartering. The cattle trade had been closed and any illicit bartering would injure the Company's monopoly. The Company also wanted the farmers near at hand to give military aid in case of a hostile attack from a foreign power. But in spite of laws and notices prohibiting this movement beyond the border the migration continued; the farmers moved onwards and the government followed.

By 1700 land was occupied, though sparsely, in a rectangle between the Cape and the mountains some fifty miles each way. Farms were occupied as far as Riebeeck Kasteel and in the Tulbagh Basin. The period up to the first decade of the eighteenth century was one of settlement when it was followed by one of dispersion because the farmers now began to cross the mountain barriers and to spread out in different directions. There were several reasons for this expansion. The dissatisfaction and the restrictive trade regulations have been referred to. The system of land tenure aided this movement. The more settled farmers, those who grew corn and those who cultivated the vine, held their places in freehold. A third type, the stock farmers, which was to a large extent responsible for the movement inland, occupied "loan" places. A "loan" place was one granted on lease for a year; the lease had to be renewed annually. The farmer chose a suitable grazing place for his stock and registered this with the government. If he found it unsuitable he moved further on and picked out another place taking out new licences. Thus he might hold two places as there was plenty of ground and an application to register his occupation was seldom refused. The government could refuse to renew the lease and re-occupy the land paying him reasonable compensation. The farmer was only an occupier of the land which he had

no right to sell. The only part he could sell or bequeath was the "opstal" or buildings which he had put up.

The government seldom refused to renew the lease except when it required the land for public purposes, or the rent was very much in arrear. The constant conflicts with the Bushmen often made the farmer move to a safer quarter. In the early years of the Colony the Hottentots had been the aggressors, but after the first quarter of the eighteenth century when they had become disintegrated and dispersed they caused little trouble. As the colonist moved further away from the settlement he came in contact with the Bushmen who plundered his stock and often killed his household. The history of the stock-farmer during the eighteenth century was practically one of constant conflict with this race. In the following century, the Bushmen having been broken up and almost exterminated, the farmers came into conflict with the Kaffirs.

Growing up in and around Cape Town was a large population of citizens which came more in contact with the Company's officials and with the seafarers as they passed to and fro. They were more in touch with European and East Indian affairs and were an entirely different type from the country people. The people of Cape Town had greater opportunities than those who lived inland or outside a radius of fifty miles. Therefore in writing of the people of the Cape we must draw a sharp distinction between the townsmen and the countrymen. Not only were the people drawn from different European countries, but also from different classes.

In describing the (social) life of the European people at the Cape in the eighteenth century, we are dealing with a people which, while imbued with all the hereditary traditions of its ancestry, had so to adapt itself to its new surroundings that it was, in fact, a new nation. Many of their customs were based on those of Europe but many were modified, altered, or in some cases abolished on

account of various influences which acted very strongly upon them. Their life was influenced by the climate, animal and plant life, seasons, the soil and sun. Their customs were an admixture of those from Holland and of the East with modifications and additions which were entirely South African. The story of their social life does not permit of the same continuity of description as when writing, say of Dutch life. The early records show many Dutch customs still flourishing, but as the conditions of life altered these customs changed with them. These changes came about by the general conditions of the country, intercourse with the natives, the attraction of the East Indies and the mixed nationalities. A new nation was being born.

The farmers by patient labour, under adverse circumstances, such as lack of knowledge of the nature of the soil, conflicts with natives, ravages of wild animals, redeemed from barrenness some of the wildest land. The border farmers were the vanguard of civilization towards the wilderness. They have often been misjudged. They lived in isolation from town or village, church or court of law, had no opportunity for education, were always watching for the attacks of the Bushmen, ready with gun in hand to defend home and possessions. Alone on the wild veld, miles away from their nearest neighbour, they became an independent community. Under these circumstances an estimate should be made of them, and if done so with fairness we can say with the late Dr. Theal: "They were simply Europeans of an advanced type who had adapted themselves to a rough environment."



## PART I.

### THE TOWN.

During the eighteenth century visitors to Cape Town were impressed with its beauty and situation. Lying at the foot of the majestic Table Mountain and surrounding hills, which stand as sentinels over it, Cape Town has a charm which even then brought forth expressions of admiration. To tell the story of this town is to write of the growth and development of the settlement of the Dutch East India Company at the Cape. The first impressions of the early comers pictured a fertile valley with a stream of good fresh water running down from the mountain side to the sea. Inhabited at first by natives and wild animals it had become a fair town in the eighteenth century where dwelt the burgher community in happiness and quietude. Round the vegetable garden of Van Riebeeck pretty dwellings of Dutch architecture sprang up with each succeeding generation, and under the shade of the trees which lined the principal streets the citizens walked leisurely about their daily work.

It began to be known to English visitors as Cape Town about 1773 and was known to the Cape residents as De Kaap. The headquarters of the Company were situated in the Castle built in 1666. Round about Cape Town was centred the civil, military and social life of the Cape. Being the port of call of not only the Company's ships but also of those of foreign countries the town was often alive with a cosmopolitan crowd of people. Many of its street names reminded the Dutch visitor of towns in his own country. There were the Heerengracht (now



Adderley Street), the Keizersgracht (Darling Street), Long, Loop, Buiten, Peper and Bree Streets, and the Buitengracht, Buitenkant, and Buitencingel shewed the then boundaries of the town. Its open squares as Markt Plein, Kerk Plein, Boeren Plein, gave a ready guide to the stranger where he could find the market, the church or the rendezvous of the farmer.

#### FORM OF TOWN GOVERNMENT.

From its early days the town had some form of municipal government. The Burgerraad or Burgher Council, which consisted of a few of the most prominent citizens, was appointed by the government and it saw to the upkeep and construction of the streets and roads, the collection of taxes levied upon the residents, the control of the fire engines, the night watchmen and those duties which were necessary to maintain general law and order amongst the community. This council had no charter but from the circumstances which created a burgher population in 1657 its members were appointed by the Company to represent the burghers on the judicial bench when cases arose which affected this community. In course of time its functions were extended to carry out the duties mentioned. It was a medium through which the burghers approached the authorities when grievances had to be redressed and also to advise the government on the taxes to be levied. In short, it performed, maybe in a primitive fashion, those duties which are now undertaken by municipalities. In 1797 the title of this body was changed to that of Burgher Senate.

The administration of justice was in the hands and under control of the Dutch East India Company but since the burgher community had representation in the various courts reference should be made to it. The Court of Justice, which sat in The Castle, took cognizance of civil and criminal cases and was the Court of Appeal from the judgments of the inferior courts such as the





View from Parade and Heerengracht (now Adderley Street) 1764.



Court of Petty Cases and the district courts. From its sentences an appeal could be made to the Supreme Court at Batavia. The Court of Justice was the only criminal court in the country, and the Fiscal, who was Public Prosecutor and Chief of Police, brought all criminals to trial before it. The accused person had very little to say in the trial as sworn depositions were handed in to the Court by the Fiscal together with his written statement of the crime. The accused was never brought face to face with his accuser or the witnesses for the prosecution. The judges read the evidence of the witnesses and the statement of the prosecutor before the Court opened and gave their verdict by vote. The whole proceedings were conducted with closed doors, and only the sentence was promulgated in public by the Secretary of the Court. According to an old law a criminal could not be sentenced to death unless he had acknowledged his crime. Therefore, to make a criminal confess he underwent some form of torture which, however, appears to have been used mostly in the case of slaves. Torture was abolished in 1797.

#### PLAN OF TOWN.

Almost from the days of the birth of the town some regularity was observed in laying out the streets. People could not build haphazard so as to create winding and irregular streets for most of the latter were laid out at right angles to each other and were straight from one end to the other. When a citizen had received a piece of ground he was obliged to build on it a house with stone foundations and of a minimum height. The walls were not to be less than twenty feet high and a lean-to was not allowed. This was done to prevent the low-lying thatch roofs catching fire from sparks driven hither and thither during a heavy south-east wind. The ground plan of the town shows that it was divided into

squares each of which was again subdivided so that houses faced the four sides of each block.

### **PUBLIC BUILDINGS.**

The principal public buildings were The Castle, the big stores of the Company along the seashore; the Hospital at the upper end with the Church and Slave Lodge on the other side in the Heerengracht. The Castle, built in 1666, was a very important building of the mother city, and remains with us as a reminder of those days. It is built in the shape of a pentagon and within its walls the Company garrisoned its soldiers and conducted its business.

The beautiful covered-in porch has historic reminiscences connected with it. From here government laws and advertisements were proclaimed by the Secretary of the Council of Policy to the people gathered in the courtyard below, after being summoned by the ringing of the bell. From here commissions of new governors, or high placed officials who took charge temporarily of the administration, were read to the populace and garrison who were likewise summoned. On such an occasion they took the oath of allegiance to the new official by answering "Yes" to the question whether they would bear allegiance. From this balcony sentences of death were promulgated in the presence of the people by the Secretary of the Court of Justice, the prisoner standing below under a military escort. Copies of the laws published as above were posted up in prominent parts of the town where the population usually congregated, as the Market Square, Court House, Church, and some were sent to the country for posting in similar places.

The Government House in the Gardens was the place where distinguished visitors were entertained and the Cape Governor resided at times. Not least important of the notable buildings was the Burger Wacht Huis or Burgher Watch House on the Greenmarket Square. It



The Burgher Watch House and Greenmarket Square, 1764.



was the property of the citizens and had been built in 1755 by the Burgher Council from money loaned from the Church and from one of the most prominent inhabitants. It was the place where the Burgher Militia and Night Watchmen kept their arms and accoutrements, where burgher militiamen were incarcerated for disobeying orders or for insubordination and where the Burgher Council held its meetings.

The Company's garden, with its long avenue of trees, which is still the pride of the mother city, was the resort of the inhabitants and strangers when walking out for exercise. It was part of the original garden laid out by Van Riebeeck but its original use had to a great extent been diverted to other purposes at this time. The two Governors Van der Stel beautified it and while some of the plots were devoted to the growing of fruit and vegetables others were planted with trees and shrubs from Europe and the Indies and also with wild plants of the country. During the eighteenth century it became the admiration of all visitors and had a wide reputation. To add to its attraction there was a menagerie and a zoo on either side at the upper end. We can easily picture the skippers of the Dutch ships or distinguished guests walking through the garden after being entertained by the Governor at his residence which was situated in the centre but on the one side of the garden.

The Company's hospital, in the Heerengracht, occupied two of the present blocks from the present Wale to Longmarket Streets. It was very necessary to have such a building for the health of the Company's servants who often arrived in a scurvy-stricken condition after a long sea voyage. It had accommodation for several hundred patients and its capacity was often taxed so that many more were admitted than was good for the recovery of the sick. A new and larger hospital was commenced in 1772 and stood on the site of the old military barracks. The Dutch Reformed Church on the other side of the



street was opened in 1704 but was enlarged not quite eighty years after. It was the only place of worship in the town until the Lutheran community was permitted to establish its own congregation in 1780. The Dutch Church was a structure which attracted strangers, and within and without its walls persons of note and the citizens of the town were buried. Eight Dutch Governors and many Dutch, French and English military and naval officers of rank were buried inside. Upon the walls hung the hatchments of many of these people and several of the last resting places were marked by fine tombstones.

Not far from the western point of The Castle was the place for public executions surrounded by a low wall. At the one end was a raised dais where the members of the Court of Justice sat to see that the sentence of the Court was executed and justice duly done. After the promulgation of the death sentence from the balcony in The Castle the prisoner was led away under a military escort, Commissioners of the Court, the Fiscal, or Public Prosecutor, and a clergyman followed the doomed man. When the sentence was carried out the Commissioners returned to the Castle to report to the Governor. The bodies of the criminals were left on the gibbets for days to the full gaze of all persons who passed in or out of the town. The idea of exposure was that it should be a lesson and warning to others. There was another place of execution outside of the town, known, during last century, as The Gallows Hill. It was a raised eminence which overlooked the present large excavation in the Alfred Docks. The criminal records shew that sometimes part of a sentence was carried out at the first place of execution and the remainder at the one outside the town.

#### STREETS.

There was much to be desired in the condition of the streets and roads of the town. They were unpaved and



uneven with the result that in winter they became running torrents and slushy. The people frequently raised the pavement near their houses so high and unevenly that the middle of the street was a hollow and easily converted into a water course during the winter. The pedestrian often found himself bespattered with mud thrown up by passing vehicles if he was not quick enough to step aside. The projecting high stoeps of many of the houses did not permit a straight run of the sidewalk and the pedestrian was obliged to walk partly in the street and partly on the side-walk in going along many of the principal thoroughfares.

In the early years of the eighteenth century the people let their sheep, cattle and horses roam about the streets, grazing along the side-walks and open spaces in spite of laws to the contrary. Pigs were also a nuisance burrowing holes here, there and everywhere, damaging young trees, gardens, squares and fields. So great had this annoyance become that anybody who caught them trespassing in his garden was allowed to destroy them. All these animals were a source of great vexation as they caused filth and stench. Farmers were accustomed to outspan their wagons wherever they chose which resulted in fodder being strewn and blown over the streets, besides the mess made by the draught animals. In 1724 the authorities made the outskirt of the town towards the hill as the rendezvous where they could outspan. This was the Boeren Plein, now Riebeeck Square. Drivers were prohibited from allowing their teams to proceed at a fast rate and from cracking their whips which was their delight, but was a danger to passers-by, and even resulted in breaking window-panes.

During the first British occupation many complaints were made by the Governor about the bad and impassable condition of the streets. Despite constant endeavours to get the Burgher Senate to see to this little progress was made on the grounds of an insufficient treasury. In

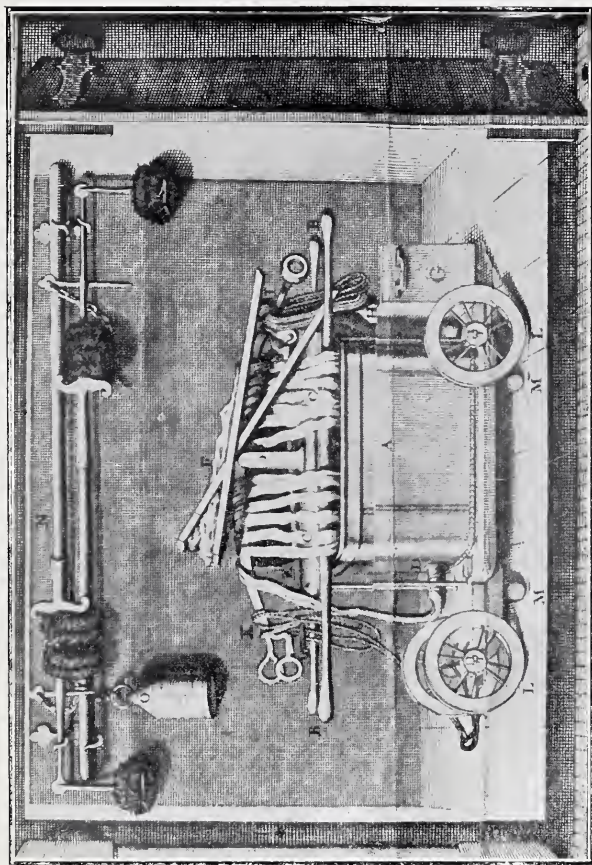
1799 a certain citizen was fined five hundred rix-dollars for spreading a false report and the Governor ordered that this amount be appropriated for the repair of the thoroughfares.

#### SANITATION.

It was no uncommon sight to see filth and rubbish heaps thrown in the streets or between the houses. An old custom provided that the streets were to be inspected twice a year by the Fiscal and Burgher Councillors after the people had been warned fourteen days before. These Commissioners saw that the street before each householder's place was clean and in proper repair. In spite of penalties imposed for creating this unsanitary state by throwing rubbish in front it continued. A suggestion to have it removed daily by carts and to tax each citizen for this service was unfavourably received. The slaves, whose duty it was to empty the night soil tubs, very often did not scruple to dump the contents into the canals or on the open squares instead of conveying them to the beach to be thrown in the sea. The pedestrian even in the day time had to walk very warily to avoid the rubbish heaps and the ruts in the broken streets.

#### STREETS AT NIGHT.

But if it was an undertaking to walk through the streets by day the difficulty at night time was greatly increased. There were no street lights and everyone who ventured out had to trust to the dim glimmer of the lantern carried by his slave. On moonless nights many drunken persons fell into the numerous holes and ruts on the Parade Ground, and sometimes accidents occurred. When it was pointed out that the streets were totally impassable and in some cases extremely dangerous and should have means of illumination, the Burgher Senate in 1797 replied that to place lamps in the streets would be costly and might be a source of danger by causing



Fire Engine and appurtenances, 1737.



a fire. Happily, some citizens with civic pride had just then conceived the idea of placing closed lighted lanterns over their front doors which the Governor pointed out obviated the apprehended dangers. It was left to the people of the next century to see lanterns placed at certain street corners and lighted only for a few hours during the night. A survival of the practice of private illumination of the thoroughfares is still to be seen in the lanterns in the fanlights over the front-doors of several of the eighteenth century houses.

#### PREVENTION OF FIRE.

In time of fire the Firewardens controlled the working of the manual fire engines by the slaves. The many thatched houses and the frequent south-east wind in the summer were dangers on the outbreak of a fire. On the alarm being sounded those responsible for the engines hurried to the station which was next to the Burgher Watch House and ordered the slaves to bring them to the burning building. The Firewardens, who were specially chosen from amongst the prominent citizens of the town, were required to keep the crowd in order, to see that nothing was pilfered and generally to direct operations. As a sign of their authority they carried a staff with the Company's monogram engraved thereon.

During the previous century the extinguishing apparatus and accessories consisted of fire buckets, scaling ladders, sledges or battering rams for breaking the walls, and canvas sails. The latter were placed upon the roof of the adjoining house and kept wet so as to prevent the thatch getting alight. Many people, when a fire broke out adjacent to their houses, spread old sails over the roof opposite to the fire and kept the sails soaked with water to prevent their roof catching alight. The above were followed by hand squirts and then by manual fire engines with hose. But the buckets continued to be used and the method was to pass them from hand to hand of men.

In public buildings, such as the hospital and the church, suitable apparatus was kept for combating an outbreak of fire.

On the fire alarm being given the drummer at the Watch House beat his drum, the bells at The Castle and the church were rung, the Firewardens were awakened and citizens, who were obliged to raise the alarm by shouting "Fire!" under penalty of a fine, hung out lanterns to help the workers. Onlookers had to render what assistance they could when called upon to do so by the Firewardens. As the fire decreased or increased the people were notified of this fact by the decrease or increase of the strokes of the church bell. Running down several of the principal streets of the town, as the Heerengracht, Keizersgracht, Buitengracht, Plein and Wale Streets, were canals or open ditches fed with water from the mountain sides. These were of great service in supplying the water in case of fire. We read that as early as 1687 a canal was dug before the houses of the freemen for household use and to extinguish fires.

A town with thatched roofs is always an easy prey to a fire. Cape Town with its south-easters was no exception and to prevent calamitous results stringent regulations were frequently issued and had to be observed by everyone. The Firewardens made periodical visits to the residences to see that the chimneys were clean. In 1723 penalties were introduced for having a dirty chimney, and if the delinquent had not cleaned his chimney by the afternoon after having been fined he rendered himself liable to the second and larger penalty. Bakers, coppersmiths, smiths and coopers who used fire in connection with their trade had to obtain the permission of the authorities before commencing their trade and had their fireplaces inspected. Baking ovens had to be made on the floor and free from all other wall work, the crown of the oven not coming nearer the ceiling than two feet. A clear space of two feet at the sides



and above the ovens had to be kept. Hay or straw could only be kept in places with stone walls and no one was permitted to keep more than six pounds of gunpowder. Hot ashes were not allowed to be thrown in the streets, and smoking of tobacco pipes in the public thoroughfares or carrying of lighted torches at night was against the law. The Night Watchmen meeting anyone smoking a pipe warned him in a friendly manner to put it out and if he persisted took him in custody to the Watch House.

#### FIREWARDENS.

The Firewardens performed their duties in an honorary capacity. They received their appointment from the Governor and Council and instructions were drawn up for their guidance. Their number was increased as the town enlarged and each one was responsible for a certain ward. They saw that the fire appliances were brought out when needed, that all present gave a hand and that the workers were not interfered with. They had to see that the flames did not spread to the adjoining property and to do their best "without hate or spite." Within twenty-four hours the Firewardens had to restore to the owners the saved goods. Many of the regulations against the prevention of a fire, the duties of the Wardens and obligations of the citizens, were modelled on those in vogue in the cities of Holland, particularly Amsterdam.

#### PROTECTION AT NIGHT.

After gun fire, at nine o'clock, the town people began to settle down for the night and to sleep peacefully under the protecting care of the Burgher Watch and the Rattle or Night Watch. Every male inhabitant between the age of sixteen and sixty years had to enrol himself in the burgher militia. In addition to military exercises and other military services he was obliged to

take his turn of duty of patrolling the town at night. This he did gratuitously and so fulfil one of the obligations as a citizen. As early as 1696 the government established a Burgher Watch to prevent thefts, fights, murders, and other acts of violence and irregularities caused by fugitive slaves and wandering rogues. The Watch paraded with muskets every evening in front of the Watch House and was inspected by the Captain of the Guard, a burgher officer, who divided them into patrols and sent them on their beats. The safety of the town lay in the hands of this officer who reported each morning to the Governor. When the Watch came upon a wounded person the Fiscal and a surgeon were called and when meeting the military patrols of the Company it exchanged the password.

#### NIGHT WATCH.

The Night Watchmen were subservient to the orders of the Burgher Council and like the Burgher Watch also assembled armed at the Watch House every evening at nine o'clock. They went about in pairs and carried rattles to sound the alarm, but they were not permitted to use these until 10 p.m. Every hour after that they sprang them at the street corners and shouted out the hours of the night. Slowly and quietly they patrolled the street, trying the front doors of the burghers' houses to see that they were secured and warning the occupiers if they found them open. They watched that no unusual occurrence took place in the inns and arrested drunken and disorderly people. Slaves walking in the street without a pass from their masters or a lantern they took into custody. Everyone found smoking a pipe was told to put it out and to each one they passed they gave a cheery good night. To those they accosted they exhibited their rattles if questioned as to their authority and they were instructed to answer everyone in a civil manner. As they passed through those streets with



canals they saw that the sluices were in order and raised them when the weather was rainy or stormy, and once a week in summer, allowed the water to run away. When a fire occurred the Rattle Watch shouted "Fire!" and at once ran to the Watch House awakening the citizens as they passed on. For several generations they were called Rattle Watchmen but in 1792 were known as Night Watchmen. The former office had become to be looked upon as a mean one owing to the scandalous and disorderly behaviour of the holders of the post who were often found tipling in the inns and incapable. It was thought that by the change of name sober and dependable burghers would come forward to take on the duties at £2 per month.

#### POLICE.

During the day the peace and order of the town were maintained by constables who came under the direction of the Fiscal, the Chief of Police. By the end of the century their number did not total a dozen. They were armed with swords and cutlasses, but the latter were "swords in the hands of madmen." From morning gunfire they patrolled the streets until 9 p.m. when the Night Watch relieved them. These constables were not men of too high a character for they were often found drunk and their conduct to those who had the misfortune to get into their clutches was none too gentle.

Oriental slaves were employed to take drunken slaves to the *tronk* or prison and execute the lowest work of the law, such as the flogging of criminals. These menials were called Caffres and dared not touch or arrest Europeans except when they caught them in the act of committing a crime. They were really the banditti from the East Indies who had been sent to the Cape to serve out their term of imprisonment. These men were unreliable and, before the rule of the Company had ceased, were replaced by European constables, slaves and free-blacks.

## TAVERNS.

In proportion to its size and population Cape Town boasted of a number of inns and drinking places where wines, beer and spirits could be obtained. The visitor had no difficulty to find these places for as he walked through the town his eye fell upon such signboards as "The Hawk," "The Last Penny," "The White Swan," "The White Horse," "The White Bear," "The Red Ox," "The Blue Anchor" and "The Golden Anchor." Here the soldiers, sailors and others met to drink away their money and carry on excesses. On Sundays they congregated in these places and danced to the music of flute, fiddle and other instruments. These were people who worked the whole week and thought this a form of relaxation. This was stopped in 1756 but the inns remained open for the sale of drink on Sunday except during Divine Service. A patron who entered the place with sword or bayonet had them removed by the inn-keeper who, if he allowed card or dice playing in the tavern, lost his licence in addition to being fined.

## DWELLINGS.

The pioneers of a country build themselves dwellings for utility in every sense of the word. They require some form of shelter from the sun and rain and construct it from the materials near at hand. There was no exception at the Cape. The first burgher dwellings were of the simplest design with just the necessary rooms and out-buildings. As the inhabitants increased in numbers and prosperity the type of house became more pretentious.

The building material was close at hand; there was plenty of stone to be quarried (at the top of the present Strand Street a long worked quarry still remains), on the beach were large quantities of shells to be burnt into lime, the surrounding hills were forest-covered from which good timber was obtained, there was clay in the



Houses in Cape Town.



valley for bricks and on the Cape Flats was plenty of thatching material for the roofs. The reeds were placed on the laths of the roof and tied to them by tarred twine or wire, but before the ends were tightened up the thatcher pulled out the ends of the stalks with a special wooden board perforated with hundreds of holes half-way through its thickness, so that only one straw overlapped another. The reeds when dried became brown but were soon changed into black by the wind and rain. A roof made of this reed lasted from fifty to sixty years and was more durable than a straw roof.

From an early date the Company found the Cape bricks unsuitable for their public works as they did not last long and absorbed "water like sponges." The making of them also entailed a large quantity of fuel, slaves, cattle, wagons, etc., and consequently the authorities in Holland were frequently asked to send out lime and bricks. But there is no doubt that many had to be satisfied with the Cape product in building their homes.

Most of the houses were at first of one storey and very seldom of more or two. It was customary in Cape Town to leave a four foot passage between each house; the main reason for this was to permit the rain water from the roofs to find its way into the street. In case of fire it enabled the firemen to get between the houses and play the hose upon every part of the burning building. The early roofs were of thatch, but in 1717 the people were urged to construct flat roofs, somewhat after the Arabian style, which were covered with red tiles resembling those used for flooring. This was to prevent the disaster which might follow a fire. The Government attempted to use tiles for some of its buildings but it was found that the south-east wind blew them off. It is also probable that on account of this strong wind only single storeyed houses were constructed. On the other hand there was really no necessity to build more than one storey as there was plenty of ground and space.

By law the foundations had to be of stone and the walls not less than twenty feet high. The walls of some were built entirely of stone. Lean-tos were not allowed to be built. Soil and climate have a great influence in the building and planning of a house and this was so at the Cape. To keep the house cool in summer the walls were built thicker and higher, the rooms lofty and the floors tiled. The houses were built on the ground-floor without basements or cellars.

Many of the houses of the well-to-do burghers reminded the visitor of the dwellings seen in Amsterdam. These were double-storeyed and approached by steps leading up to a raised stoep in front. The architecture was of a pleasing design and some houses had ornate gables in front. There were certain features in the architecture which were peculiar to almost all the houses. They were built to suit the climatic conditions and inside the rooms were both spacious and airy. At either end of the stoep, which was covered with blue flags — quarried at Robben Island — or red Dutch or Batavian tiles, was a masoned seat where the family sat in the cool of the summer's evening to enjoy the fresh air. The windows had many small panes and the upper sashes were always fixtures.

The front door was often composed of two sections which worked independently of each other. Above the door was a fanlight which was often of a pretty carved design. Some houses had a window which could be raised or lowered so as to meet the lower half of the front door and thus, with the fanlight above, gave ample light to the entrance hall, especially on dark days. In several respects the Cape houses were similar to those in Holland, but the gable, though fashioned somewhat as seen in Holland and Belgium, had a typical South African development. The span roof and the green coloured windows and doors, of which the Cape people were very fond, and the loft for keeping grain and fruit reminded one of the Dutch homes.



## INTERIORS.

Upon entering the front door the visitor came to a large hall, or "voorhuis," from which a room led off on either side. These were the bed-rooms, one of which was the state sleeping apartment set aside for visitors. The latter became in later days the drawing-room. The "gaandery," or large dining hall, led off from the "voorhuis" from which it was separated by a screen of teak or some dark wood. Rooms led off from the dining-room to bed-rooms, also to the "dispens" or provision room now called a pantry, which was the pride of the housewife who kept on the shelves many bottles of confitures and fruit. The kitchen was a close adjunct to this and as a rule it was large and spacious with a big hearth and bread oven.

The ceiling of the rooms was not boarded but the massive support beams were open to view as was once in common use in Europe. This was characteristic of the Cape houses. In the backyard were outhouses for slaves, store-rooms, stables and coach house. A narrow stairway led up to the second floor and to the attic. The latter was often used as an observation station for the family to look across the bay and watch the arrival and departure of the ships.

The floors of the first storey were covered by blue flags or red tiles kept highly polished and necessitating care in walking over them to prevent a fall. In the poorer class of houses the floor was the hard mother earth kept clean by strewing sand over it. The stone floors made the rooms very cold in winter which was particularly noticeable to visitors accustomed to the warmer interiors of European houses.

There was one comfort which the majority of the houses lacked and that was a hearth or fireplace in the living rooms. Towards the end of the century these came more into use in the new houses. In 1799 a gentle-

man records, "Weather getting cold and evenings cold, long and uncomfortable, inhabitants labour under great inconvenience, few having a fireplace in any room except their kitchen which is occupied by their slaves and of course is not approachable by the master of the family." He also tells us later that many of the people found the keeping of a fire too expensive.

In the early years of the town life there was an abundance of wood and the mountains were thickly wooded. When the number of settlers was small they felled the timber close to their first abode for building their houses or for fuel and never thought of afforestation. This custom went on for years and as the population increased the demand for wood became greater. Before the close of the seventeenth century the gathering of fuel was controlled by the authorities and from time to time the area in which it could be collected was laid down. Every household was obliged to send out daily two or three slaves to search for and collect firewood. This consisted of shrubs and even roots or stumps of trees already felled. The servants were away perhaps the whole day at Camp's or Hout Bays, or far away on the Cape Flats and brought back only a few bundles. This was a great household expense. Coal had to be brought in the Company's ships and at great expense so that coal fires were not the general custom.

The householder of to-day considers that his home is incomplete without a bathroom. Two centuries ago this was an unknown room in the home. I have not yet seen such a room mentioned in the inventories describing the rooms and their contents of an eighteenth century home. But this does not imply that the people were unclean, far from it. Travellers who have recorded their stay at the Cape note the cleanliness of the people and their custom of frequently changing their underclothes during the course of a day. Bathrooms were certainly not the custom.



There were no water leadings to the houses and wells were dug or the people sent their slaves to fetch water for domestic use from the pumps on the various squares of the town. On the Parade was a fountain with a constant supply of water.

#### TRADE. — MEANS OF LIVELIHOOD.

Cape Town was, strictly speaking, a commercial centre. As the headquarters of the Dutch East India Company it was the port of call where many of the riches of the Indies found their way. The inhabitants, imbued with the commercial spirit of the authorities, also carried on trade amongst themselves within certain limitations. There was no importing or exporting of merchandise by them for this was in the province of the Company only. Many of the inhabitants pursued an illegal trade with the captains and minor officials by smuggling in Indian goods as tea, coffee, rice and clothes which they found no difficulty in disposing of.

On the arrival of the ships the people looked forward to lodging and boarding the officers, visitors and seamen, for no one, whatever station in life he was, considered it a discredit to keep a lodging house. Foreigners were welcomed as they were made to pay as a rule, more than the normal charges; their arrival generally meant a rich harvest. The master of the house sent his slave with a note to the captain or purser of the ship inviting them to stay with him. It was a busy time when the ships came for then most business was done. This means of subsistence was not sufficient were it not that the necessities of life were so cheap. Every one who lodged a stranger was obliged to notify his arrival before sunset to the officer of the main guard.

Cape Town was a busy centre on arrival of the fleet, and before it sailed the crew and passengers were notified of the intending departure by a drummer who paraded the streets, beat a drum and cried out that all

had to be aboard within twenty-four hours. The farmers of the surrounding districts came up to sell their produce which they could only do three days after the arrival of the ships.

In addition to the above means of livelihood the burghers carried on the usual trades, as smiths, carpenters, bootmakers, tailors, bakers, etc. With cheap slave labour the master did little of the work connected with his trade. A slave baked the bread for the baker, a slave sewed for the tailor and a slave did the carpentry or masonry for the house builder. Before a Company's servant received his discharge and papers to reside as a burgher he had to shew that he was able to earn his living by some trade, and dared not change to any other calling upon pain of losing his freedom. As early as 1680 Company's servants were forbidden to keep shops for the sale of goods of any kind as this was a privilege of the citizens who sold only such goods as would not prejudice the Company. The standard weights used were those of Amsterdam, and once a year a day was set aside when the tradesmen had to bring their weights and measures for assizing. Special permission had to be obtained to bake and sell bread. Each baker had to mark his loaves of bread with a special registered design. This was as a rule his initials. If he sold underweight he rendered himself liable to a fine and the suspension of his licence; the light bread was confiscated and sent to the hospital for the sick. He could only deliver the bread between five and six a.m. in winter, and six and seven a.m. in summer, and four and five p.m. the whole year round.

Up to 1715 gold and silver smiths carried on their business without any restrictions when it was found that the people were being defrauded by having to buy inferior and expensive jewellery. From this time all those who desired to carry on this trade had to pass a test and be approved of by two government assayers. Each

smith had to have his own private registered mark for stamping his goods. His work had to be examined by the assayers who, if they approved of it, stamped it with the official mark which was the image of Hope. The selling of unmarked gold or silver ware incurred a penalty of £2. A jeweller could only sell tested gold and if he disposed of false stones set in gold he was banished from the country for six years.

There were no trade guilds or unions at the Cape. The Company held too strong a restraining hand over the people to permit any combination of tradesmen. Each tradesman carried on independently but carefully watched that the rights of his business or that of others carrying on the same trade were not infringed by under-selling. The government had a method of raising revenue by farming or leasing out certain privileges, in fact every branch of business which could be carried out as a monopoly was so controlled. The people did not resist this system as a maximum price was fixed by law for everything sold. Thus there was a monopoly in the sale of wine, malt beer and spirits, tobacco, bread, meat, salt and other articles. It was customary that the privilege to sell these commodities was put up to auction every year and the highest bidder was permitted to retail those articles. The dealer had no power to extort an inflated price for his goods.

#### RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF CITIZENS.

Let us glance for a moment at the rights and obligations of the burghers, which were generally applicable to all the colonists. I have already pointed out that in the Colony there were two classes of Europeans — the officials of the Company and the freeburghers. The former could not carry on any trade whatsoever, nor could they own any land. When a Company's servant received his discharge and was allowed to remain in the Colony as a burgher he obtained a "Letter of Freedom"

(Vrybrief) which gave him the right of carrying on any of the trades allowed the burghers. One of the conditions of his burghership was that if at any time he misbehaved himself his citizenship could cease and he made himself liable to be taken back into the Company's service and sent to any of its possessions. This power was frequently exercised. Even a burgher whose conduct had become notorious and was a nuisance to the community rendered himself liable to the same penalty. Petitions were often received from parents, the Burgher Council, the Board of Landdrost and Heemraden, asking the government to take their sons or other members of the community into service on account of their dissipated habits or bad character.

When he received his "Vrybrief" the recipient had to enrol himself on the list of burghers and also with the burgher militia. When a burgher was appointed, from a nomination of names sent in to the Governor and Council, to a seat on any of the local boards, as the Burgher Council, the Court of Justice, the Orphan Board or country courts, he could not refuse to take office except for some very weighty reason.

Both in town and country the people were called upon to assist personally, or by substitute, in carrying out public works, or to give the services of their slaves or draught animals. In the country, for instance, a man might be called upon to ride hay to the Company's stables, fuel for the minister, repair the highway, lend his wagon and draught animals for transport. In 1743 every farmer that came to Cape Town with his produce had to ride a certain number of loads of stones to the mole or breakwater then in course of construction at what is now Mouille Point.

Services, such as judges, magistrates, wardmasters, firemasters and militiamen, were given gratuitously. In the higher administrative offices it was considered an honour to be elected to these positions as they gave the





occupant and his family a certain dignity in the social world. The burghers took no part in the central government which was the prerogative of the Company officials except that they had representation on the judicial bench and the Orphan Chamber. The people jealously guarded any of the privileges which they enjoyed and raised a bitter cry of complaint if these were in any way infringed.

#### PRECEDENCE.

At the Cape there was not that same class distinction which prevailed in Europe. Out here, there was a feeling of equality; the richest and the poorest mixed with each other and addressed each other in familiar terms. But, when it came to social functions or seating in the church each one held tenaciously to his right of precedence. Any infringement of this privilege was opposed with the utmost vigour and frequently gave sufficient cause to appeal to the highest authority for redress. The records abound with innumerable cases of petitions sent in praying for adjustment of a quarrel between citizens on this ground. High officials also raised their voices and did not even hesitate to stir up ill-feeling. Disputes arose as to who should receive the highest military salute, whose wife should occupy the foremost seat in the church or whose carriage was to keep the crown of the road.

This right of precedence appears to have been exercised through all the Company's possessions and did not have its parallel elsewhere. An order of precedence was drawn up to which everyone had to give observance. The ladies, amongst themselves, took the precedence of their husbands or fathers. Ministers of religion enjoyed a high place and came before members of the Court of Justice out of regard for their spiritual office. Members of the inferior courts of law came before the junior officers of the burgher militia who preceded the secre-



taries of the country districts. Deacons of the church, parish clerks and sick comforters or catechists also had a place on the roll. Special forms of address were laid down for each rank. When the list was rearranged in 1795 we find attorneys, who shortly before had first begun to practise, appearing rather low down. Sextons were added to the new list and, with the parish clerks and sick comforters, ranked last. The disputes of precedence were not only carried on in public life but at funerals and in the church. The ladies had their chairs placed according to their rank, the higher the rank the nearer the pulpit their chairs were placed.

#### MILITARY DUTIES.

The male section of the community was subject to military service to aid and assist the government to defend its property and their own. Threatened by the danger of an attack from a foreign power, surrounded by perils of marauding natives in the interior, every male had to come forward when summoned. At any moment the burgher militia might be warned to appear for active service.

The first burgher corps was established in 1659 to protect the families and homes of the farmers along the Liesbeek from the inroads of the Hottentots. As the country expanded and the population increased companies of burgher infantrymen and cavalry were organised. Their services were frequently used to overtake fugitive slaves who pillaged farms, or to form a punitive expedition against marauding Bushmen. They were called upon on several occasions to the capital to protect it against a threatened landing by a foreign power.

Once a year there was a general muster-at-arms when a training camp was held for a week. No one was excused except under a medical certificate and absentees were fined. Rich and poor appeared armed and equipped and were instructed in foot drill and the use of



the musket. The "wapenschouw" was an event of some importance, and the competition of shooting at the popinjay was keenly contested. The target was in the shape of a parrot placed upon a pole in the centre of a circle with a radius of five roods. The marksmen chose their position upon an arc of the circle according to the value of their subscriptions. Prizes were awarded for hitting different parts of the bird, and the marksman who hit the rump off received a bounty of £5 from the Company and was dubbed the "King of the Marksmen." His fellow competitors carried him home in state and he retained the title until it was wrested from him at the next year's shoot.

In Cape Town the militia passed in review order before the Governor before the camp broke up. The farmers living in the interior found it very inconvenient to come up to this annual training. They had to leave their farms in charge of the women-folk who were exposed to the dangers of an attack by the Bushmen. They had to travel sometimes hundreds of miles and were often delayed by swollen rivers. Each infantryman or mounted man provided his own uniform which was blue with silver mountings, the former being distinguished by white vests and breeches and the latter by yellow.

The officers received their appointments from the Governor, and formed a Burgher Military Council to enquire into cases of insubordination or other breaches of discipline. The militiamen were sometimes fined or imprisoned in the Watch House — in the "burger gehoorzaamheid" — for periods extending from eight to fourteen days and given only bread and water. On New Year's day they were entertained by the Governor, but this was discontinued in 1762 on account of the expense to the Company.

## PART II.

## SOCIAL LIFE.

It is necessary to know the Cape people in their homes, in their daily and social life if we wish to understand them properly. For the first generation or so this was essentially Dutch, but as the generations passed it was modified to suit the conditions by which the people lived. New customs, which were typical South African, were introduced and their daily life was influenced also by the manners and habits of the East Indies.

The first generation had a strong attachment to the Fatherland, and the customs to which they had been accustomed here were faithfully observed. As the population increased and expanded they became more South African and the influence which was at work brought new usages in its wake. The forms and ceremonies connected with marriages, baptisms or funerals were to a great extent those of Holland, but in such matters as the preparation of food, the methods were Dutch and South African with a touch of the East Indies.

## MARRIAGE.

The home life of a people is bound up with the married life and it is from here we should commence the study. Before a young couple could enter into the bonds of marriage certain legal formalities had to be observed. The parties had to appear before the Matrimonial Court at Cape Town and were examined as to their names, ages, birthplace, religion and that no impediment existed. If the enquiry proved satisfactory the Commissioners of the Court issued a certificate to the effect that there was no objection to the banns being called.

In the evening of the day upon which they appeared before the court the parents of the young lady gave a dinner and dance to celebrate the occasion when relatives and friends came to congratulate the young people. The dinner became to be known as "Commissioner's Dinner." The banns had to be published in church on three consecutive Sundays after which the marriage was solemnized on Sunday at the morning service.

That same evening a reception and dance were given by the bride's parents. The occasion was one for the display of great pomp, and so lavish was money expended that a regulation was passed to modify all this. If the father had more than two dozen guests he had to pay the government £10 and a like sum if he put up triumphal arches before the house, unless he was a member of the government. If the bridegroom was not a Senior Merchant (one of the official ranks in the Company's service) he could not use wagons and horses bedecked with ribbons and tassels; nor could he use Chinese lanterns.

The largest room in the house, tastefully decorated with evergreens and flowers, served as a reception room. The mirrors on the walls were decorated and the floor strewn with flowers, gilt and silver tinselling. The bridal pair sat under a large mirror adorned with a wreath of myrtle, flowers and ribbons, designed in the shape of a heart. A young boy announced and presented the ladies to the young couple and a young girl did the same for the gentlemen.

A sumptuous dinner was followed by a dance and supper. The evening was spent in card-playing and singing by those unfitted for the more youthful active amusement. The table was spread with fish, fowl and venison and at the bottom end was a large roast pig with an orange stuck in its mouth. The choicest wines were generally kept for these occasions and before the guests rose from the table the health of the family was drunk

by passing round a large "bokaal," or loving cup, which seldom held less than a pint and sometimes a bottle of wine. This large drinking glass made of the finest glass or crystal, was often beautifully engraved and had some appropriate motto or verse. Slaves who possessed remarkably good musical talent discoursed the music.

It was a custom to decorate the bridal chamber and the bedstead with flowers and tinsel, and strew the floor with the same material. To prevent unnecessary extravagance in having an ornamental bridal bed for exhibition a tax of £60 was imposed for this.

Soon after the supper one of the elderly gentlemen, generally an intimate friend of the family, in the middle of the dancing, led the bride to the door of the bridal chamber and he was soon followed by the bridegroom accompanied by the married ladies and gentlemen who bade the couple good-night. The guests inspected the bridal chamber during the earlier part of the evening. There is no doubt that the leading of the bride to the chamber was the survival of the Dutch custom of "dancing the bride to bed" when after the inspection of the room the guests wrested from the lady such articles as her veil, ribbons, necklace and garter, and "plucked her as a cook does a bird."

The expenses connected with a marriage were proportionate to the position of the bride's parents. In 1761 a gentleman paid £22 9s. 2d. for the necessary clothing and accessories for his daughter who was bridesmaid, and two years later his bills for her own trousseau and other incidentals amounted to £61 11s. These covered items purchased during a month when the young lady participated in the festivities at the betrothal and marriage ceremony. In the first instance the amounts were for flowers, gloves, fan, handkerchiefs, lace, shoe ribbons, chintz, cambric and other materials. The most expensive items were £12 8s. for fifteen and a half yards (Dutch) material for a dress at 16/- per

yard, and £5 for eight yards of lace. The items of expenditure for the marriage were for linen for chemises, cambrics, silk, lace, fan, pocket money, the wig-maker, musicians, messenger, coachman, cook and incidentals. These included a sum of £12 12s. for eighteen yards of lace, £9 for sixteen yards of lace and two yards of cambric, £9 9s. for one roll of silk, and on two occasions three musicians were paid £5 10s. respectively, the cook receiving £3 12s.

## BAPTISM.

Early marriages were the general rule and large families averaging twelve were common. The necessities of life were easily obtained at a low cost and the warm climate of the Cape was both healthy and pleasant. These factors accounted for early marriages and the increase of offspring when each household was large owing to the healthy and sober lives of the parents. At the Cape the increase was numerically greater than was usual in other parts of the world. It was quite common for girls of fifteen or sixteen and young men a few years older to marry and have a family of ten or fifteen. These early marriages made the women look at least ten years older than their European sisters, and before middle age made them stout, a characteristic noticed in a number of the Cape ladies. It was rare to find an unmarried lady and for a married woman to have no offspring was looked upon almost as a disgrace.

The Sunday following the birth of a child, or within a week at least, it was taken to church for baptism. The church was against baptism in a private house but allowed this under urgent circumstances provided two church office bearers were present. The sponsors, or godparents, presented the child. Each child had two or more sponsors whose names were recorded in the register.

It was a custom to give the eldest son the name of his paternal grandfather, and the eldest daughter that of her maternal grandmother. The other children were named after their parents or uncles and aunts. The repetition in a family of the same christian names caused sometimes, even as it does to-day, much confusion. This resulted in many nicknames being given to the people so as to distinguish them. These names often referred to the hair, face or some characteristic feature, as, Rooi Piet (Red Piet) because of his red hair or face, Zwart Piet because of his swarthy colour. Sometimes the name of a man's farm was added to that of his christian name, as, Koos *Roodewal* or Jan *Leeuwfontein*. To distinguish the grandson of a man whose son was still living, all of whom bore the same name, one would hear something like this: Groot Piet (the grandfather), ze Piet (the father), ze Klein Piet (the grandson).

X The respect shewn by children to their parents also extended to their brothers and sisters. The eldest brother they called Boet, the second brother Boetie, and the eldest sister Sussie. Even the servants had their designations, Ayah was the nurse, Outa was the senior male servant.

On the day of the baptism, or shortly after, the child received a *pillegift*, or present, from his godparents. In the country it generally took the form of heifers or ewes. As the child grew up, he would be enriched by the successive increase of these animals. The custom of giving a *pillegift* was of great antiquity in Holland where it took the form of a silver bell, chain, purse or even a coin. The records here show that such articles as a "silver spoon," and "silver swords" were given. There does not appear to have been a christening feast at the Cape as was customary in the Netherlands, but after the ceremony relatives and friends gathered at the parents' home when light refreshments, as wine and cake, were served.



## UPBRINGING AND EDUCATION OF CHILD.

The child was left, as a rule, to the care of a slave nurse girl, called the "Ayah," until he went to school. When the mother was out he was always seen in the arms of his ayah who had to pacify him and humour his caprices. Many ayahs became very attached to their little charges to whom they were afterwards given in ownership by the parents. Sometimes the young master or mistress emancipated the slave girl for her faithful services and she frequently nursed their children and grandchildren. In the home of the wealthy citizens each child had a nurse to dance attendance upon him and in course of years learnt to order the servant about and exhibit a domineering spirit to the domestics of the home. The close companionship with the slave nurse did not always improve the child's morals. He became imbued with habits none too good, learnt language none too sweet. The young boy, as he grew into manhood, considered himself superior to everyone, and having learnt from his cradle the power to command and to expect obedience could with difficulty cultivate the spirit of obedience himself.

At the age of six or seven the child was sent to school to learn the simple elements of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and such subjects of religious instruction as would fit him for church membership. The lack of proper schools and teachers both in town and country was a great drawback to each generation. The material for progress and advancement was there but the medium for developing that material was lacking. The Company showed little anxiety for matters which did not concern its commercial affairs; although schools were established in the town the instruction was very elementary indeed. Many of the wealthier people sent their sons to Holland to be educated.

Two attempts were made to establish High Schools in Cape Town but owing to the want of support their existence was not of long duration. Schools could only be opened with the sanction of the government and the schoolmaster had to be of the Reformed religion, competent and god-fearing. The consistory of the Dutch Church controlled the schools and applications to start a school were referred to the members. An ordinance of 1714 provided that the children were to be taught the Lord's prayer, the ten commandments, articles of the Christian faith, morning and evening prayers, prayers before and after meat, the ordinary prayers, the catechism and the singing of the psalms. It aimed at the instruction of the youth in the fear and knowledge of God, and all good arts and morals. On Sundays the schoolmaster controlled the children in church and they had to join in singing the psalms and to repeat the catechism. Children were taught to respect their parents, their seniors and persons of authority. As the minister or schoolmaster passed down the street the boys always respectfully doffed their caps.

✍ The education of the youth was far from what could be desired and visitors of different nations to the Cape have written disparagingly of the conditions which existed. Commissioner de Mist in his report on the Cape in 1802 said that, "The young folk are indolent and seem to possess an intense prejudice against exerting themselves mentally, and indeed avoid doing so on every possible occasion. . . . " "The teaching of reading, writing and the elements of arithmetic and of geography will be our most powerful ally in advancing the progress of civilization there."

#### RELIGION.

As a whole, the Cape people during the eighteenth century have been looked upon as a religious community.



The Company made provision for religious instruction of its servants and in the early days, when the bell rang, required them to attend Divine Service on pain of forfeiture of a month's salary. When the population of the Colony was small the state of religion was in a better condition than it was during the last half of the century. In 1750 the total community of colonists was a little more than five thousand souls, there were only five churches and the members of each church outside of Cape Town lived scattered over a very wide area. It frequently occurred that when a clergyman was removed to another centre or by death the congregation was without a spiritual leader for years. This was bound to have a bad effect upon the religious spirit of the people. The long distances that some had to travel to church over bad and difficult roads made the people neglectful and careless in their attendance. When the Cape Town congregation numbered only three hundred adherents in 1731 it could be said of them that "there were many attentive and pious church-goers."

In 1743 it was observed with sorrow and astonishment the little use made of public worship and the religious indifference and ignorance a great portion of the country people lived in. They appeared to be rather "a collection of blind heathens than a colony of Europeans and christians." Two more churches in the country were, therefore, established. Towards the last quarter of the eighteenth century the Cape Town people shewed a lamentable carelessness in their religion. This was more marked when the French regiments were stationed here for several years a little later on. Pride, pomp, lasciviousness, vanity and disregard for the preaching of the Holy Word was common. Even the more respectable members absented themselves from worship. Unbelief shewed itself more openly and many lived as if they had no religion at all. But a change for the better came over the community later on in their religious life.

The only religion tolerated in the Colony was that practised by the Dutch Reformed Church which was Calvinistic. The Church was under the control of the Company, and its clergymen were paid from its treasury. After nearly fifty years of persistent endeavour to establish a congregation the Lutheran community was permitted in 1780 to establish one in Cape Town.

Town.

There were two classes of clergy which the Company provided. To the important stations clergymen or "predikanten" were appointed, and to the smaller places men of a lower rank called sick-comforters or sick-visitors, "ziekentroosters." They were both servants of the Company, the unmarried ones contracted for ten years service and the married ones for fifteen years. Their duties were clearly defined by instructions and any deviation therefrom brought forth a rebuke from their superiors. The sick-comforters instructed the children and held divine worship but could not administer the sacraments. They had to visit the sick as often as it was necessary, and were not to censure in public those in authority and thus bring them into contempt but were to admonish such persons in private.

#### SUNDAY SERVICES.

The order of service on Sundays was very similar to that of the Reformed Church to-day, in fact, the people have been very conservative in this respect. The clerk, or "voorleezer," known as the Dominie, opened by giving out a psalm sung to the accompaniment of an organ, if there was one, or by the clerk leading. An old metrical version of the psalms was used and the singing was somewhat slow. During the singing the minister, in cap and black gown, mounted the pulpit. After the psalm he offered a prayer and then the Ten Commandments, the Creed and a portion of the Holy

Scripture were read. A prayer followed during which the men stood reverently with their hats before their eyes, and the women remained seated with bent heads and hiding their faces behind their fans, but during the hymns all were seated. After this another psalm was sung and then the sermon was delivered.

The sermon was of great length lasting from an hour and a half to two hours. A diarist of 1705 was forced to remark about the afternoon service that the parson "began to preach near three p.m. and when the people came out the sun shone none so high over the horizon, by reason that the preacher began his discourse a deal too late, the which no little inconvenience for those who live at any distance." A pause was made when halfway through and the deacons collected the offertory in velvet bags attached to the end of a long black silver mounted pole. At the bottom of the bag was attached a silver bell, no doubt to wake up the sleepers. It was considered a sacred duty to give a contribution. These bags were still in use in several country churches within the last thirty years. In some churches in Holland to-day such bags are used.

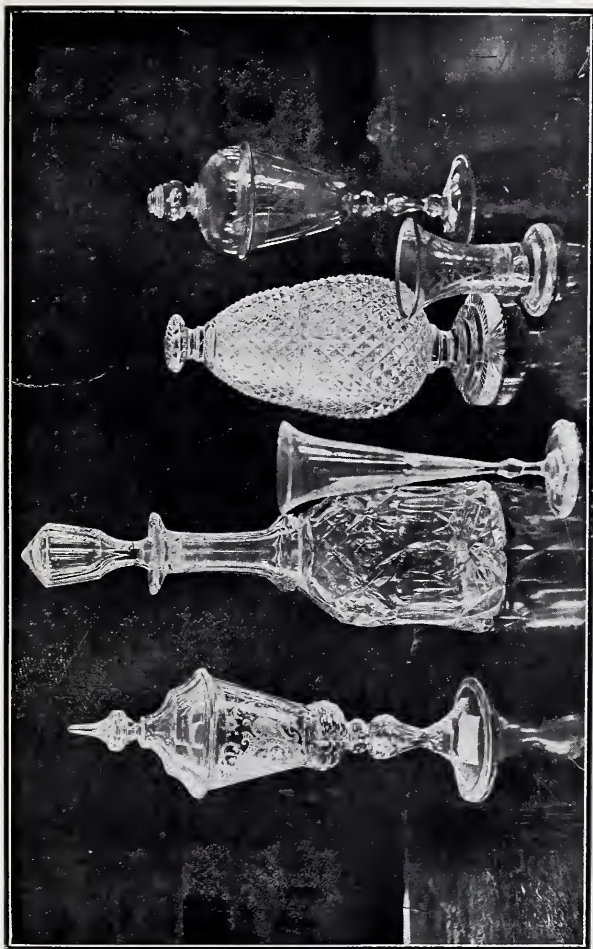
When the sermon was concluded the marriages and baptisms took place or the Holy Communion was celebrated. A prayer, a psalm and the benediction closed the service. Morning and afternoon services were held every Sunday. Once a quarter the Holy Communion was celebrated, preceded by a preparatory service on the Friday. The communion was held immediately after the service, the minister reading from the pulpit the prescribed formula. During the singing of a hymn or psalm he then descended, supported by the elders and deacons, and took his place at the long table covered with a spotless white cloth. The communicants were then invited to participate in the sacrament, the men first communicating. After the prayer the minister administered the bread and wine and closed with a short address. As

the communicants retired they placed a coin for the poor under a white napkin which covered the collection plate at either end of the table. There were several relays until all had partaken of the Lord's supper.

For the more respectable citizens Sunday was a holy day. The family went to church followed by a retinue of slaves. One slave carried the umbrella of the mistress, another her psalm book and a third brought the "stoofje" or footwarmer. The latter was a box-like footstool, one side open and the top perforated. A chafing dish with warm coals was placed underneath. The slaves were not allowed to loiter around the porch of the church but had to keep outside while they waited for their masters. Frequently these servants chatted, laughed and joked to the annoyance of the worshippers. Notwithstanding a Lord's Day Observance Regulation many breaches of this occurred. People were prohibited from doing manual labour as carpentry, masonry and building, and the sale of edibles and wares was not allowed during Divine Service. At one time the taverns were open all day; they were the meeting places of soldiers, sailors and workmen who drank, sang, and danced.

#### HOMES OF BURGHERS.

A description of the architecture and plan of a burgher's house has already been given, let us step inside and look at the furnishing thereof. A visitor to the Cape in 1793 informs us that there were no furniture factories and that this was imported from Europe. Those pieces made here were clumsy and high in price. Cabinets, chairs, chests, and tables came from Holland; glassware and table service from England. There is scanty direct evidence about the making of Colonial furniture but in addition to that obtained from Europe and from the East Indies there was a certain amount manufactured at the Cape. Among the burgher com-



Collection of Glassware.





Farm at Noordhoek, Cape Peninsula, about 1778.

munity were men who had been cabinetmakers and joiners in the Company's service and there is no doubt that their number was supplemented by many slaves who came from the East and Ceylon and were excellent craftsmen. On this account these slaves were much prized by their owners. There were also political and criminal prisoners banished to the Cape which included Cingalese, Chinese and Javanese; among them were many who understood furniture-making and carving; they must have been responsible for some of the massive and fine pieces of furniture still existing. There was no dearth of suitable material to carry out this work. The two most common indigenous woods were stinkwood and yellow-wood, the latter growing in abundance at one time on the slopes of the mountains about Cape Town.

Early in the eighteenth century mention is made of stinkwood and yellow-wood chairs, tables and bedsteads. Many of the floors of eighteenth century houses were yellow-wood. Teak and ebony, which were also used, came from the Indies and Mauritius respectively. Camphor-wood was grown at the Cape and this was particularly used for making clothes-presses and boxes as the wood kept moths out. The more important articles of Cape woods were rustbanks or settees, tables, chairs, four-poster beds, china and glassware cabinets and beautiful wardrobes or armoires. It is probable that Dutch, French, English and Eastern furniture was copied. Labour was comparatively cheap, especially when the craftsman was a slave. The inventories of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries of household furniture extant in the Archives give some idea of the various pieces found in the home and the woods from which some were made.

The "voorhuis," or hall, was the living room of the family where they gathered and conversed. In some cases it was the shop or workroom. In earlier years it was also a sleeping apartment and in it was found a large four-poster. This "voorhuis" was furnished with one or

two rustbanks with mattresses, footstools, oval-shaped tables and half a dozen or more chairs. In one corner stood a grandfather clock and in the other a sedan chair used by the lady of the house when she went out calling, to a party or dance. In most houses were found an umbrella-stand and a lantern of tin, wood or horn. The umbrella was carried by a slave when the master or mistress walked out and at night time he escorted them by the glimmer of the lantern through the dark streets. The walls were hung with paintings, some no doubt by noted Dutch artists, maps, a barometer, clock and one or two branch candlesticks. A copper basin and water tank for washing the hands was often seen on the wall and now and again a bird-cage or two.

The walls of the rooms were at one time colourwashed but later on many of the burghers had them painted with artistic designs and figures. The bedrooms contained chintz-covered tables, chairs, clothes and linen presses, and a gueridon or two. The gueridon was a small, round stand on a spiral leg four or five feet high, used at the bedside for the candle. A large wooden four-poster bed, with carved or turned pillars, coloured drapings, and canopy of red or blue, was found in almost every house. The mattress was made from kapok or fine down. The place of the modern stretcher bed was taken by a "katel" which was a frame of hard wood with leather thongs interwoven across. Pictures, silver-backed oval and round mirrors, with or without candelabra, hung on the walls. The linen and clothes presses were often fine pieces of furniture made from hard wood of the East or the local woods. A large brass-bound kist or chest upon heavy carved feet, from the Indies was the general receptacle for the best clothes of the family.

In the "gaandery," which led off from the "voorhuis," was an assortment of chairs, tables, presses and sometimes a copper or brass wash-basin as in the hall. In almost every room were shelves with porcelain, pewter-ware and



frequently guns and swords. The kitchen was crowded with brass, copper, pewter and porcelain so loved by the modern collector. Everything shone brightly. Pewter and porcelain plates, *wafelyzers*, porcelain cups and saucers, pots, pans and kettles were in almost every house. In the houses of the wealthy nothing seemed to be lacking and what there was, was good and substantial. The people lived in ease and comfort.

It is beyond our scope to enumerate the many items of furniture and articles of domestic use in the home of an eighteenth century citizen. Then, as now, there were the rich and the poor and the quality and quantity of their furnishings differed. From the beginning of the century there were tables, chairs, settees (rustbanks) and bedsteads made of stinkwood and yellow-wood. Cabinets of teak, "Chinese" chairs (probably carved by Chinese), mirror-frames, cabinets, clothes presses and desks of ebony were common. The "ambonshoute," ebony or stinkwood cabinets or armoires, which contained the household linen, personal linen and very often the jewellery, had a set of blue porcelain jars on top. These armoires and presses were ornamented with beautiful designed silver or brass mounts. Cuspidors of wood, porcelain and copper were found in many of the rooms. We even find in 1755 mention made of silver ones. The "stoofje," or footwarmer, was never wanting in any home. The "kerkstoel," or special chair for use in church on Sunday, made of ebony or stinkwood, was kept at home. Now and again we find, amongst the furniture, an English desk or an English bureau and in 1788 six English pictures.

Mention of a few items in the home of the widow of a Burgher Councillor in the Heerengracht in 1718 will give but a slight indication of the variety of articles. In the "voorhuis" were three maps, a painting, an ebony-framed mirror, six porcelain slop-basins, a wooden lantern, two tables and six chairs. In the left-hand room were three pictures, ten slop-basins, an ebony "rustbank" with

chintz cover, stinkwood bedstead with blue drapings, an ebony-framed mirror, stinkwood table with chintz cover, oval tea-table, desk with ebony feet, "red" ebony cabinet, six Chinese easy chairs with plush cushions. The right hand room contained a large ebony-framed mirror, two small portraits, two racks with assorted porcelain, a Japanese barber's basin, a musket rack with two muskets and a pair of pistols, a "red" ebony chest, a painted screen, a four-poster bed with drapings, an East Indies chest with copper mountings, eight chairs, an armchair, six plush cushions. The large room behind had three paintings, two engravings, two ebony-framed mirrors, ten porcelain dishes, twenty-one slop basins, six saucers, an oval table with a chintz cover, a back-gammon table, two small bedsteads, two large cuspidors, fire-irons, fireplace drape, eleven assorted chairs, hat box, a clothes box and a large "alkatief." In the kitchen were pewter dishes, plates, candlesticks, copper funnels, skimming ladles and pans of all sizes and shapes, iron pots, rice block and pestle, porcelain cups, saucers, plates and dishes.

Many of the well-to-do citizens and those of moderate means possessed articles of silverware for daily use. The more important ones were silver spoons, forks, teapots, mustard pots, pepper pots, candlesticks, tea kettles with "confoors," soup ladles, sugar basins, silver handle knives and sauce bowls.

#### DAILY LIFE.

The daily life of citizens was somewhat monotonous. It commenced with a cup of tea or coffee before rising. The men rose early and the women an hour or so later. Breakfast was at eight a.m. and the midday meal, the chief one of the day, was at noon. A casual visitor who might call on business in the morning would be offered a well-filled pipe which he lit from a live coal brought on a dish by a slave. He would be pressed to take a glass of wine. About four o'clock coffee was drunk



Stinkwood Wall Cabinet for china and porcelain.



and with it were served confitures and pastry. Supper was between seven and eight in the evening. An appetiser of wine and bitters was drunk before the midday and evening meals at which beer and wine were served. Everyone retired for a short rest after the midday meal; this custom was induced by the hot enervating climate in summer. Business was suspended between noon and two o'clock. The leisured class undressed and went to bed to enjoy their siesta, but were presentable at afternoon tea or coffee. It was customary for a lady, who wished to call in the afternoon, to send her slave in the morning to enquire whether it would be convenient for her to do so. This was but a gentle reminder for her hostess to be up to receive her. As the heat of the day wore off the family sat on the stone benches at either end of the front stoep. The men smoked and the ladies dispensed tea or coffee.

The evenings were spent in exchanging visits; two or three families arranged to meet at a friend's house. The time was passed in social conversation, cards, at the piano and other musical instruments and in dancing. The scene was one of happy contentment. The older gentlemen smoked, the ladies busied themselves with needlework while the juniors enjoyed themselves. After gunfire at nine p.m. the slaves waited outside on the stoep with sedan chairs and lighted lanterns to escort the ladies home. By ten o'clock most families were indoors and the Night Watchman commenced to sound his rattle and call out the hours.

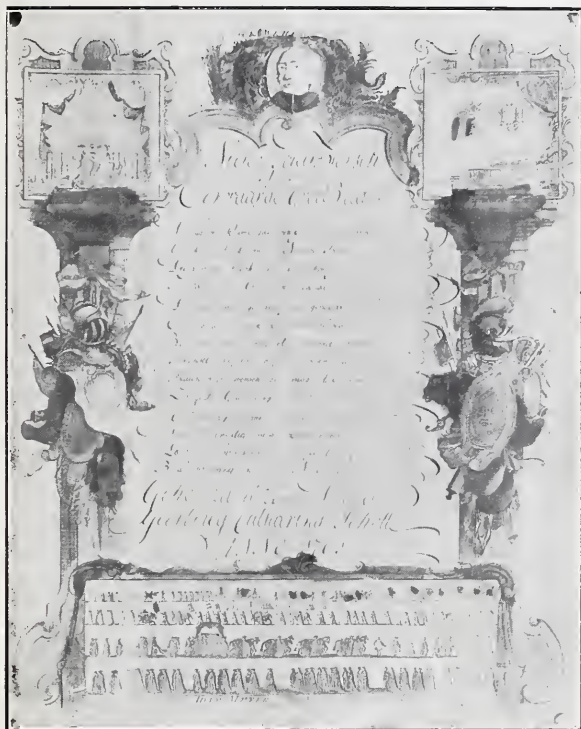
Christmas Day was observed as a church day, when divine service was held and the Holy Communion celebrated. There were no special outward signs of the occasion, which was usually passed over quietly. New Year's Day, however, was a day of greater importance to the Cape people. At midnight of the 31st December, as the New Year began to dawn, bells were rung, cannons, muskets and fireworks let off. In spite of persistent

regulations prohibiting the letting off of these explosives the practice continued. It was feared that the flying sparks would set the thatch roofs alight and cause irreparable damage. On New Year's Day the chief citizens paid their respects to the Governor and were generally entertained to dinner in the evening. Children sent New Year cards to their parents and grandparents; these were filled in with appropriate verses and had pictorial borders.

About the beginning of the last decade of the century Cape Town had become to be a very different place to what it had been in previous years. The arrival of the French regiments in 1781, at the outbreak of the war between England and Holland, had set a new fashion in Cape Town life. These troops were here several years and thus long enough to make their influence felt. The inhabitants began to build fine houses or remodel their old ones which they furnished in a costly manner and kept a large retinue of slaves. Everyone seemed prosperous but the prosperity was temporary for, on the withdrawal of the French troops, and the reduction of the garrison, the crash came and creditors pressed for payment of their debts. So gay and stylish had the life become that Cape Town was known to travellers as "Little Paris."

#### Food.

At meals the tables were, as a rule, well provisioned: game, fish and fruit always appeared on the table of the wealthy. The cooking was according to Dutch and Cape method. The latter was strongly influenced by the usage of the East Indies where condiments and much seasoning were used. In many homes to-day the old Cape cooking prevails. Who has not enjoyed what may be considered typical South African foods, although they originated in the East, such as various stews known as "bredie," "soesaties," "kerrie" (curried meats) and



New Year's Card, 1761.





“bobotie.” It would be interesting to know whether many of the East Indian dishes were not themselves influenced by the cooking which the Dutch had learnt in India, where they possessed many stations. The condiments as “atjar” made from apricots or from chillies, “blatjang” and “sambal” are too well known to dilate on. Fat was freely used in the preparation of food. In 1799 a gentleman recorded that the “English crockery has in a great measure banished the delicious ragouts sent up in a sea of sheep’s tail fat which usually was the sauce for every dish.”

The Cape people had a reputation for making pastries and sweetmeats, and we find a distinction made between “Dutch pastry” and “Cape pastry.” Even to-day those who know the Cape cooking will recall the eating of “koekies,” “oblietjes,” “wafels,” “poffertjes” and “pannekoek.” In the preparation of food, cakes and sweetmeats the domestic slaves had a large share, many male slaves being good cooks and makers of pastry. Through them a knowledge of East Indian dishes and highly flavoured condiments was obtained. In the “dispens,” or pantry, of every home the housewife stored a selection of canned fruits, pickles and condiments of her own making. Fish was pickled in oils, onions and certain leaves. Apricots were dried and made into “mebos,” no doubt an art learnt from the East, and watermelon, oranges and shaddock were preserved and eaten at afternoon tea or coffee.

The beverages were tea, coffee, chocolate, seltzer water, beer, brandy and wine. The South African people are said to be a great coffee-drinking community, but a fair amount of tea was also drunk. This was obtained from the East and bought at a high price. In looking through the inventories of household effects the tea kettle and teapot appear more frequently during the first half of the century. Both black tea, bohea and green tea, were drunk, the former costing in 1715 but 2/9 to 3/0 per lb., and the latter 3/0 to 4/0 per lb. Light wine was always

on the table and at eleven o'clock in the morning everyone partook of a glass of wine and cake. Callers were offered a dish of tea and there would always be a pipe of tobacco for the men. To-day the drinking of tea has taken the place of wine. Those who indulged in spirits took arrack, geneva and brandy. There were no coffee houses in Cape Town such as were found in most cities of Europe, but there were more taverns than were necessary for the size and population of the place. Here the common class of people were to be found.

#### AMUSEMENTS.

The amusements of the people were few. There was no theatre or public hall of entertainment. It was not until 1800 that the first theatre building in South Africa was erected and horse racing was first introduced a few years before. The people did not require any of these as they were quiet and easy-going. In the home there were many indoor amusements which kept them occupied during their leisure hours. Cards, ombre and whist, billiards, draughts, chess and backgammon were played. The ladies played the spinnet and the harp, and the men the violin, flute, hautbois and other wind instruments. The Cape people had a passion for dancing, and nearly everyone indulged in this form of recreation. Contre dances, waltzes, minuets and quadrilles were the favourite dances. Amongst the wealthy who had young folks in the house a dance was a regular pastime. The orchestra on such occasions was supplied by the slaves who were excellent musicians. The cook exchanged the saucepan for the flute, the groom left his curry-comb and took up his violin and the gardener threw down his spade and sat down to his violoncello. During meals the slaves, seated on a raised dais at the upper end of the large dining hall, discoursed music.

Reading was not a great pastime, there was not a single bookshop in the whole country. There were no

newspapers printed until 1800. The newspaper for nearly a quarter of a century was controlled by the Government, and its main features contained government and other notices and general items of information, but it was not as informative as when the freedom of the press was obtained. What tidings of the outside world there was was obtained from European papers many months old. An effort by the Government to obtain the sanction of the authorities in Holland to establish a printing press at the Cape proved a failure. It would have ensured a universal benefit to the community, government proclamations and notices could have been disseminated amongst the most distant inhabitants of the Colony and would have encouraged them to read the laws. It would have brought these far-off residents more in touch with the central government and the people in the west. On the whole it would have been an incalculable benefit to the Colony. The usual tittle-tattle of European events was gathered from the seamen of the passing ships.

The people took their walks in the Company's garden or drove out in their carriages. The number of horses in a carriage was restricted by law according to the rank of the owner who, unless he was a man of rank, could not dress his coachman and footman in livery. Owing to the badness of the roads six horses were usually used when going into the country. This must not be attributed to a desire for pageantry or magnificence but to necessity. The ladies were carried in sedan chairs when making calls or going to church. The men were frequently seen walking up and down the stoep smoking their pipes. Conversation was very circumscribed, and it generally referred to the state of business, the latest dance and the one which was to follow; sport, as shooting and hunting, was a topic of common interest. In 1766 a Society House was built by a certain number of gentlemen at what is now Sea Point, where they could stay with their families for a short while or go there for recreation. In 1797 a

social club was started where the men gathered to drink and smoke and spend an hour or two in social intercourse.

Smoking at the Cape was universal. The clay pipe with the small bowl and a short or long stem was generally seen. Virginian, Brazilian and Mauritian tobacco was used and this had to be bought from the Company which prohibited, under severe penalty, the growing of tobacco.

#### DRESS.

It is difficult to give an accurate description of the dress worn by the Cape people during the successive generations of the eighteenth century. The tastes and the character of the people were different and to obtain a vivid and true picture we would require paintings to aid us. There are very few of these. We can only look at the matter from a broad view point during the century. The European fashion in dress was followed at the Cape. The clothing of the town people was very different from that of those living in the country. The latest fashion came to the Cape many years after it had been in vogue on the continent. At one time we find the Dutch fashion in clothes, then the English style and when the French troops were here after 1782 the French mode prevailed. The wardrobes of the wealthy show a large assortment of silk and satin dresses, cloth suits, all of various colours and a great variety of jewellery. The ladies dressed in style and the gentlemen, when walking down the Heerengracht, might have been gentlemen strolling along one of the fashionable streets of the large cities of Holland.

A list of articles found in a lady's wardrobe in 1766 shows the following assortment of clothes: sixteen pairs of cotton stockings; a pair of silk stockings; sixty-seven handkerchiefs, assorted; twenty petticoats; a black velvet gown and one plain silk one with fringes; one blue satin gown with bright flowers. One white satin embroidered



Group of Company officials showing dress of early 18th century.





gown; one green and brown silk gown; seven chintz gowns; two white twill gowns; two golden waist bands; three flowered gauze mantles; three pairs black silk gloves; handkerchiefs embroidered, with lace edgings; cambric and plain; cloth mantles of red, black, satin lined with fur; four pairs of shoes and four hats. Lace caps; mourning caps; ruffles and a great assortment of other articles formed part of the outfit.

A list, giving a gentleman's outfit of the same period, shows two dark blue silk cotton lined Moorish coats; a white flowered silk doublet, embroidered with gold; a red silk doublet with gold galloon; a dark brown unshorn velvet coat and two dark brown plain trousers; a light blue silk doublet embroidered with gold; a blue velvet doublet, gallooned with gold; a yellow cloth doublet with silver; pair of red velvet breeches; two pairs of dark blue velvet breeches; breeches of satin; green shot coloured breeches; forty-six shirts with ruffles and twenty-three without ruffles; three pairs of cotton gaiters; two pairs fine white cotton stockings; nine knitted cotton caps; twenty-two red handkerchiefs; sixteen blue handkerchiefs; twenty-two white doublets and waistcoats; two chintz chamber cloaks; pair of velvet slippers embroidered with silver and many other articles.

In the middle of the century there was a tendency in the East Indies and other possessions of the Company, such as the Cape, for the inhabitants to display luxurious habits. They thought that to be considered somebody it was necessary to drive in a carriage with coachman, groom and flunkey, to dress well and to have a retinue of servants. The authorities tried to suppress this mode of living and issued sumptuary laws so as to do away with undue pomp. This had not been the first time for, from time to time, regulations had been published against luxurious habits. Governor Simon van der Stel in 1687 had been annoyed because a lady had used a parasol to protect herself from the sun's rays. He dis-

approved of, and forbade, its use as he considered the colonists were far removed from pomp, luxury and sensuality. The sumptuary law passed in 1755 was a modification of that passed at Batavia as many of the regulations under the latter were not applicable at the Cape. This law restricted the use of livery for servants, large umbrellas and the wearing of silks and satins by the ladies. The wearing of trains by the ladies was forbidden under a fine of £5. Only those of the rank of a Junior Merchant and above, and the wives and daughters of those who had a seat on any of the public boards, could use a large umbrella. No one below the rank of a Merchant could enter the Castle in fine weather with an open umbrella. The law entered into details as to the number of servants and horses that each rank could have, and the dresses of various classes.

#### HEALTH.

The Cape people led a healthy life, and while they were subject to all the ailments to which human flesh was heir there were, practically speaking, few illnesses. Among the most prevailing ones were consumption, dropsy and rheumatism. A writer tells us that the women were more subject to the first caused, if the doctors were to be believed, by catching cold and drinking cold water, while heated after a dance. The other two were found more prevalent in men, caused by drinking an excess of wine, the easy life led and the lack of exercise. The doctors were not able to make a substantial living from their profession and frequently had to augment their income by carrying on some form of trade. From the books of a Cape Town physician we learn that his average annual income from his profession was about £57.

The remedies used for sickness were very simple and the pharmacopœia of the physician limited. Bleeding and the use of leeches were the usual cures for most



maladies and were resorted to for injuries, wounds and sores. Blood was let from the head, neck, arms and feet, or leeches applied to the same parts when venesection could not very well be applied. For the relief of acute inflammation of the internal organs, and with the object of causing a counter irritant to a part which could not be reached by other remedies, blisters were frequently applied to the skin. The most common blister was the Spanish fly. Cantharides or Spanish fly when dry was pounded fine and mixed with leaven and vinegar and applied as a plaster to the face, lips, nose and fingers. Blisters were administered for toothache, earache, cataract in the eye and such like aches.

The instruments used by the surgeon were few and simple. Every surgeon possessed scissors, razors of various kinds, lancets, incision knives of different shapes, spatel, forceps, various shaped needles, catheter, trepan, tourniquet and cauterising irons. Splints and bandages were always on hand. The resources of the surgeon were few and heat was applied by cauteries for the staunching of blood after an amputation. Most households possessed a medicine chest of homeopathic remedies, the usual make being the "Halle Medicines."

The people had become very resourceful in the use of indigenous herbs and remedies which they had learnt from the natives. Except for the Company's hospital used for its soldiers and sailors there was no other institution of this kind. Those who suffered from mental disorders had no restraint put upon them except when they became violent and were a source of danger to the public. These unfortunate people were allowed to roam about the streets without any care bestowed upon them. Relatives or friends who could afford it built a single room outside their home to confine such persons, otherwise they placed them in a padded room set aside in the Company's Slave Lodge.

## FUNERALS.

The burial of a person was attended with a great deal of pomp and ceremony and the customs observed were in many ways similar to those in Holland. The undertaker verbally notified the relatives and friends of the death and invited them to attend the last rites. During the next century, when printing was introduced, the notification and invitation were printed and taken around. In this intimation precise details of the exact age of the deceased (the months and days being given), the hour of his death and when the body was to be removed were clearly stated.

On the day of the funeral, which was a day or two after death as bodies could not be kept on account of the hot climate, the bearers appeared at the house a half an hour or so beforehand. They gathered in one of the rooms and were each given a pair of black gloves, a long crape weeper worn on their hats, the end of which reached below their knees, and were handed a coin on a tray in payment for their services. They were then provided with wine and cake.

When the body had been removed some paces from the house the undertaker, who was also the local sexton of the church, read out the names of the mourners in attendance. They were placed in the cortège according to their order of precedence. In arranging the list he had to observe the utmost care and be on his guard that no one of inferior rank preceded one of a superior rank. Many disputes arose over this right of precedence. In the procession the undertaker preceded the corpse behind which the relatives of the deceased came first, followed by the friends and acquaintances; the mourners walked in pairs. Only the men took part in the funeral ceremony. As a rule the body was carried on a bier covered by a black velvet pall with silk fringes. Wealth or poverty of the dead person did not regulate the pomp

Mon. reu. H. W. Y. L. r. Meere Debit			
1743.	Jan. Mgn. Onderget. lende voer H. meamenten.		
27.	April 4. Coorts poeyers.	—	4
29.	Juny. 4. Graech poeyers, 2 voor Anders.	2.	4
32.	July. poeyers pillen En 2 poeyers poeyers.	3.	4
8.	october 4. Graech poeyers En een olie.	2.	4
9.	12. Een Visite En Ankeat.	—	4
	6 Graech poeyers. En poeyers pillen.	3.	4
10.	2 <sup>e</sup> . 6 Graech poeyers.	3.	—
25.	2 <sup>e</sup> . Ogen Water.	—	2
1744.	2. Jan. Lagers Reining.	—	4
	Spaens Nieuwen playster, gorgel Water ichidure om te Wassen.	—	4
13.	Febr. 1. Longe piteo En adertaal.	—	4
23.	april 2 poeyers pillen, En inchtur 30 dropels.	1.	—
	12 Graech poeyers, En 12 poeyers poeyers.	6.	—
	Coorts poeyers 12 Dosis.	1.	4
28.	2 <sup>e</sup> . Een Visites En Timetis tegen de Coortien.	1.	4
2.	1 <sup>e</sup> . 6. Graech poeyers En poeyers tegen de Wormen.	3.	6
	• puntus om te Wassen, En een poeyers.	2.	4
14.	9 <sup>e</sup> . olie 11 dropels tegen de Gely.	1.	—
1745.	2 <sup>e</sup> . 11 July tot 2. 17 Dit En Longe piteo.	2.	—
Meer. Priet.		Somma. R. 35 7	
D. 23. July		J. C. Chabor (S.)	
1745.			

Account rendered for medical services and medicine supplied, 1745.



and ceremony of a funeral. It was the ambition of the relatives to give the deceased as splendid a funeral as possible. The pall bearers, who were specially chosen intimate relatives or friends, walked at the side of the bier.

At one time it was a custom to strew sand along the route to the grave, but this was afterwards prohibited and only allowed at the funeral of a Governor or member of the Council of Policy. People were often interred at night, when lantern bearers formed part of the procession, their number being regulated by the number of pairs which followed in the cortège. We read of twenty-one lantern bearers at a funeral in 1715. There was also a custom of scattering flowers over the route, but this appears to have died out before the middle of the century. Towards the end of the century burial by torch-light in the church was prohibited as there was fear of fire and as there was not sufficient time to close up the grave before the Sunday service when the interment took place at a week-end.

At a funeral there were paid mourners or weepers called "huilebalken," who had to weep and exhibit great distress. There was also another class of paid mourners called "tropsluiters," who had to follow in pairs at the rear of the procession. During the walk to the grave these "tropsluiters" frequently changed places with each other. There was a superstition that the last person in a funeral procession would be the next to die and therefore to distribute this grave risk places were changed.

Interments took place within and without the church, but after the grave-yard round the church was closed another was opened outside of the town. Governors, high officials and members of the best families were buried in the church. It was an honour to be interred in front of the pulpit and this was only granted for governors and other highly placed officials. There was

little ceremony at the graveside, no clergyman attended. The undertaker's assistants stood ready to close up the grave or the masons waited to mason up the underground vault.

After the body had been committed to the earth the undertaker, on behalf of the relatives, thanked all those present for their attendance and invited them to return to the house of mourning for refreshments. The funeral repast turned the home of sorrow into one of hilarity. The mourners were regaled with tea, coffee, beer, wine, brandy, pastries of Dutch and Cape baking, sweetmeats, rasped bread, bread, cheese, sausages, and if held in the country, pork, roast fowl, duck, goose and turkey were served. To these were added raisins, almonds and olives. For the men there were churchwarden pipes, tobacco and snuff. No wonder Adam Tas, in his diary of 1705, in recording a funeral, remarks that some of the food was left, but that the wine gave out. He had ordered for the repast five pails of wine, one Cape ham, three fat quarters of roast mutton and three loaves "so as they may make merry withal."

A writer of the middle of the nineteenth century tells us that at the funeral of wealthy persons everything was in such profusion that it was customary to take a share of the cakes home for the family (*pour les enfants*). ~~X~~ The best wine was generally produced on this mournful occasion, and some people kept a cask of very old vintage which was only drunk at such a feast.

When a hot course of poultry or meat was given it was usual to serve "yellow" rice with it. This was rice coloured by borrie with raisins added. Such a dish received the name of "begrafenis rijs," or funeral rice. Rice was a usual dish at meals and no doubt the customary use of it was derived from Batavia. Such were the ceremonies observed at the burial of a citizen.

When a governor, high government official or military officer of rank died the pomp and ceremony in the fun-

eral procession were much greater. Bells tolled at intervals and minute guns were fired while the body awaited interment and when it was lowered the military fired three salvos. So great was the extravagance and pomp displayed in connection with a burial that from time to time, and especially in 1755, the government laid down regulations which stipulated the number of undertakers which could be employed and what rank of people could have horses with funeral furnishings.



## PART III.

## THE COUNTRY.

The country people formed the bulk of the European population of the Cape Colony during the eighteenth century. Their chief industry was agriculture and the farmers may be divided into three classes: the wine, the corn and the cattle farmers. In the introductory chapter I referred to the opening up of the country by these people and showed the influences which led to this expansion. There were three places besides Cape Town where courts of law had been established, namely: Stellenbosch, founded in 1679; Swellendam, in 1746; and Graaff-Reinet, in 1786. There were Dutch Reformed Churches at Cape Town, Stellenbosch and Drakenstein (established in 1691), Roodezand (now Tulbagh) in 1743, Zwartland (now Malmesbury) 1745, Graaff-Reinet 1792, and a Lutheran Church at Cape Town 1780. The townships were of slow growth during the eighteenth century and remained virtually mere villages.

## ✓ THE VILLAGE.

The general layout of these places was very similar. They had fairly broad streets crossing at right angles to one another or had one long street from which the others branched off at right angles. The streets were lined with oaks or other shady trees on either side down which ran a water furrow. The latter carried the water to the fruit and vegetable gardens at the back of the houses for a certain number of hours each week for each owner. The large *plein* or square in front of the church

was the market place and the rendezvous of the farmers when they came to the village for business or to church. This square is found in most towns or villages in South Africa to-day. Each house stood in its own ground or "erf," there being little occasion to build them adjoining each other as in a town. The architecture was simple and planned somewhat similar to that of Cape Town. The roofs were thatched and in case these caught fire the complete destruction of the house was prevented because the loft was protected by a floor of hard-baked bricks covered with mud. This loft was called a "brand solder." Many of the houses had in front gables of pleasing design and a stoep with masoned seats at either end where the family generally gathered during the cool of a summer's afternoon or evening. At the back of the house were the fruit and vegetable gardens.

The principal buildings in a village were the *drostdy*, the parsonage and the church. The first comprised the residence of the Landdrost or Magistrate, with his court-room, offices and other accommodation to carry out the administrative duties of his district. The parsonage was one of the substantial houses with a large garden and sufficient ground for the minister to raise produce of various kinds for his household. The Landdrost was the chief person in his district and represented the government. He knew his district well and presided over a Board of Heemraden to try petty civil cases and adjust a variety of disputes between the inhabitants.

The Heemraden were men chosen from amongst the most notable and respectable of the country people to assist the Landdrost in carrying out his duties. They sat as petty magistrates, decided minor civil actions, saw to the making and maintenance of the streets and roads, looked after the water-courses, and received the taxes paid by the people. In fact, their duties in the village were very similar to that of the Burgerraad in Cape Town, and they undertook those functions performed at

present by Divisional Councils. They had power to compel inhabitants to supply wagons, cattle, slaves and their own labour for public purposes. The office was an honorary one and if a burgher was appointed by the governor he could not refuse except for some very good reason. The area over which a Landdrost had jurisdiction during the eighteenth century was very extensive. It must be remembered that then the Colony was divided into only four districts and comprised the greater portion of the Cape Colony of the nineteenth century.

The Landdrost had to travel often for days on horseback to hold an inquest or a judicial enquiry. The Court of Landdrost and Heemraden could only try petty cases where the amount in dispute was small. The members could not try criminal cases but the Landdrost deputed two Heemraden to take evidence thereon and he presented the accused before the Court of Justice in Cape Town which was the only Criminal Court in the country. Thus a prisoner had to be brought sometimes hundreds of miles to the capital for his trial. If the Fiscal or Public Prosecutor at Cape Town so desired it he could take the case out of the hands of the Landdrost and investigate it himself.

#### THE DISTRICT SECRETARY.

In each district was a District Secretary who attended to all the secretarial work of the Board of Landdrost and Heemraden. All deeds of a notarial nature were passed before him and the people came to him when they wished to make their last will, enter into a contract or pass a power of attorney. The Secretary received the taxes due by the people to the district treasury and paid out amounts for services rendered. For instance there was a tax in each district, the funds of which were called Lion and Tiger Money, which went towards paying rewards for the destruction of wild animals.

In the early days the public roads were unsafe for the traveller and farmer who ran a personal risk and suffered losses of oxen, sheep and poultry from the ravages of the carnivora. The Company offered premiums for their destruction and at first paid them out of its own treasury, but later on this expenditure was shared equally by the Company and each district treasury. The prices paid were at first high, but as the population increased they were reduced. The old custom that the head and skin of the animal had to be produced either at The Castle or the office of the Landdrost was changed in 1745, when the dead animal had to be exhibited as evidence. The government had become suspicious that unscrupulous persons were bartering furs from the Hottentots at a distance. A farmer often set a poisoned dog as bait to exterminate the large number of wolves roaming about.

#### ✓ MILITIA.

The country inhabitants were subject to the same military laws as in the town; each male between sixteen and sixty had to enrol in the burgher militia. In the inland towns they were formed into infantry and the farmers were allotted to the dragoons and cavalry. Every year they were assembled for a week's training and exercised in the use of the musket and in foot and mounted drill. The militia were called out on commando to pursue and overtake runaway slaves or punish marauding Bushmen. In each district there was a board of officers, generally chosen from amongst the Heemraden, called the Burgher Military Council. This Council nominated officers to vacancies and submitted the names to the Governor for his approval. It dealt with matters of discipline and awarded punishments for breaches of conduct or dereliction of duty. If a militia-man was unable to attend the annual camp through illness he had to produce a medical certificate. A father

who had two sons or three stepsons was exempt from military duty.

The distinguishing uniform of the infantry and cavalry in the country was the same as in Cape Town, blue uniform with silver mountings, white vests and breeches for infantry, and yellow for the cavalry. Each one had to provide his own arms and equipment and in the case of a mounted man his own horse. Each horseman had to equip himself with a pair of pistols. The cost of an outfit for a young dragoon in 1730 was about £12, which included £5 for a saddle and bridle, and £2 for a gun and a pair of pistols.

The farmers were warned to assemble for defensive purposes by signal cannon fired from high mountain peaks. The alarm was first given at The Castle, when the signalmen at various points in the country took up the report. An old law provided that everyone hearing the signal was to warn his neighbour and each one had to appear under his respective standard before the Landdrost and await orders. The situations of these signal stations are still commemorated by the place names given to the mountains and hills in many of the older districts, *e.g.*, Kanon Kop or Kanon Berg (Cannon Hill). Many of these old cannons are to be found to-day on the hills where they were then placed.

The Landdrost was commandant of the troops in his area and was assisted by a very useful officer, called the Field Cornet, who was responsible for the ward of the district to which he was allotted. The Field Cornet, formerly known as a "Veldwagter" or "Veldwagmeester" (Field Guard), undertook duties of a judicial and civil nature and in time of war acted in a military capacity. He knew, and kept a list of, every inhabitant in his ward, and in time of necessity assembled the militia. His position, like the Heemraad, was honorary and he was chosen for his integrity from amongst the most reputable farmers.

## ✓ HOUSES.

The houses of the country people, in a place such as Stellenbosch town and in the more closely settled areas as Paarl and Drakenstein, were dwellings of some elegance. There lived the vinegrower who was among the more wealthy class in the country. His house compared favourably with the town residence. The rooms were large, airy and spacious and furnished with good substantial articles. He did not live far from the capital and could thus procure his requirements without much trouble. The inventories of household furniture of places such as what is now the Stellenbosch district indicate that he had everything to enable him to live in ease and comfort. In many instances the several porcelain articles of the town house were substituted by pewter ones in the country. Although the Cape people as a whole were not great readers there were many homes in this part of the country which possessed a small library, many of the books being, however, on theology. These people possessed the most fertile lands and were consequently wealthier than their neighbours further inland.

## LIFE.

Life in a country village was very quiet, almost like that on a farm. Each one went about his daily work and in the evening exchanged visits with his neighbour. There were no public amusements, but of indoor recreations dancing was one for which the villager and farmer had a great fondness. The usual indoor games indulged in by the town folk were also played by the inhabitants of the village — games such as chess, draughts, back-gammon and cards. The village school was in charge of the Voorlezer or Parish Clerk who instructed the youth in reading, writing and arithmetic, the psalms and church catechism. On Sundays he took charge of the children in church, saw that they sang the psalms and answered the questions on the catechism. His dress was sombre,



black coat, waiscoat, breeches and stockings and he walked with dignity through the streets. As the boys met him they politely raised their caps.

#### THE CHURCH.

The Sunday services in the country were as lengthy as in the town. Often the government proclamations and advertisements were published by the minister from the pulpit or read from the church steps by the Voorlezer as the congregation left. Copies of these were nailed to the door of the church. This was one of the few means that the country people had of learning the laws of the country, but as can well be realised, they were soon forgotten.

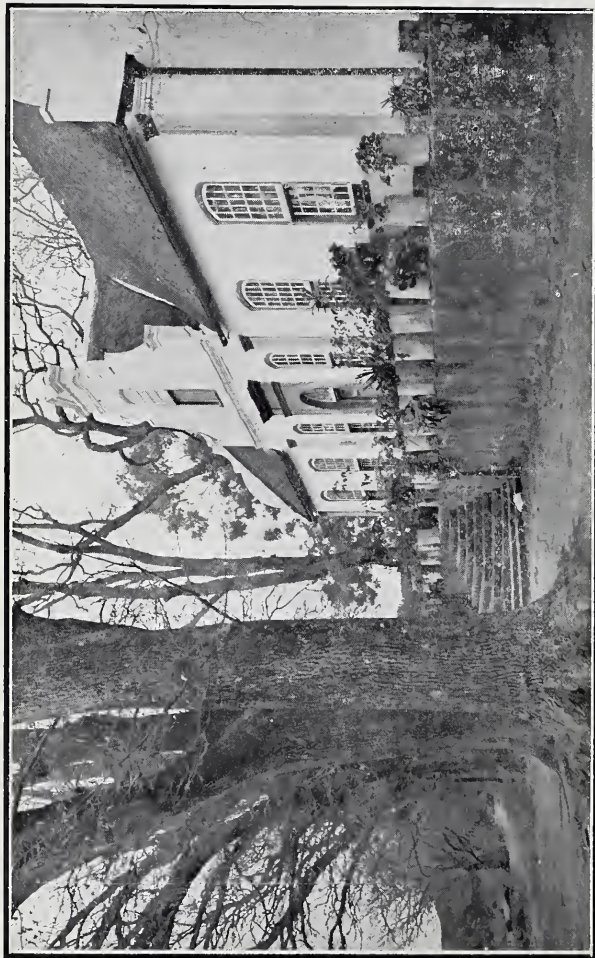
Once a quarter the Holy Communion was celebrated, when the farmers came in their wagons from far and wide. The square in front of the church was a lively scene of people and wagons and here the sale and bartering of goods went on. The farmers generally arrived in the village the Thursday night before the celebration as on the Friday afternoon a preparatory service was held. Adam Tas records in his diary of 1705 that at one of these services "The precentor sang . . . dismal, tedious and low, to wit, the fifty-first Psalm." Those who could attended this quarterly service regularly, others only once a year. The visit was the occasion to bring produce to the market and to lay in a stock of groceries and other household requirements.

The baptism of children did not take place in the country with such promptitude as in the town. The great distance at which many of the farmers lived and the difficult roads and swollen rivers they had to traverse resulted in a visit being undertaken at long intervals. It frequently happened that parents presented at the same time three or more children for baptism of ages ranging from a few months to several years. The ambition of most parents was to have their children admitted to





Homestead on wine farm... Simple design.



Farm house with artistic gable.

church membership. The qualification for this was an ability to read the bible and the metrical psalm book. At the age of fourteen or sixteen the young folks were presented for confirmation, which was a momentous occasion in their lives.

Jealousy regarding the rights and privileges of rank within and without the Church prevailed in the country as it did in the capital. The men sat on one side and the women on the other side of the church and each lady's chair was placed nearer the pulpit the higher her social rank. The Landdrost, or Chief Magistrate, ranked first in his district, was given a front seat on a raised dais with a canopy and behind him sat the Heemraden in a special pew. Next to him came the clergyman, his wife and daughters took amongst the ladies the relative position of their husband or father. The elders and deacons were seated in a prominent position on either side of the pulpit.

The elders and deacons of the church were appointed by the Governor from a nomination of names submitted by the Kerkraad or Consistory. Those selected could not refuse to take office. They were offices of dignity and the holders were men much looked up to and respected. Tas has given us a descriptive account of his induction as deacon in 1705. The minister he calls with mild sarcasm "His Holiness," and writes: "His Holiness did take his text from the prophecies of Haggai, Chapter II., verse viii., but pitiful, dreary, and different times come near to stick. Preaching over, Mr. van der Heyden and I was summoned before the pulpit for to have us ordained, Mr. van der Heyden for elder and I for deacon. After the charge was read over to us, and we had made response thereto, His Holiness did step down from the pulpit, and took us by the hand and did wish us much health and blessing in the service we were newly entered upon. This passage I must confess I did find no little droll, considering I have never seen the like before."

After a communion service a Thanks Offering Service was held, when the people gave liberally towards the support of the church and poor. There were no more charitable people who gave so readily to assist the poor and distressed than the country people, for they contributed willingly and generously. On Sunday the collection bag brought in a considerable sum for this praiseworthy object. At communion time the wealthier persons as a rule slipped piles of silver coins under the napkins which covered the collection plates at each end of the communion table. Destitute orphan children, and children whose parents were not fit and proper to bring them up, were generally adopted by well-to-do people. There was no difficulty in finding such foster parents who treated these children as their own.

#### POOR.

The Cape was fortunate in not being burdened with any poor tax. In the real sense of the word there were no paupers and there was no poverty such as existed in Europe. No man, woman or child ever wanted for a crust of bread. The people were, as a rule, very liberal in support of the poor and unfortunate. The real poor who could not earn their bread were looked after by the church and deacons. There were no charitable institutions as Poor Houses or Homes for the aged, nor were these needed. People too old and unable to look after themselves were always able to receive food and clothing. To assist, take care of and protect poor widows and orphans and needy persons the government appointed in 1687 the ministers, elders and deacons of the Cape Church as trustees of a Poor Fund known as the Diaconate Fund. This was well supported and always increased its capital.

## THE MINISTER.

Next to the Landdrost in the country the clergyman took precedence and he was a power amongst his flock. He and his wife took their place amongst society in town and village. He was a paid servant of the Dutch East India Company and received free of rent a residence with a large tract of land attached to it where he could carry on farming on a small scale. The parishioners gave him many presents as game, fruit, sheep, wine and other "good things of life," so that he never lacked anything for his table. He was always suitably provided for and was much respected; his situation placed him beyond the fear of want or pecuniary embarrassments. At his retirement he received a pension and on his death his widow also enjoyed a small government pension. Periodically the minister, accompanied by one of his elders or deacons, went on "huisbezoek" or visitation amongst the congregation. This entailed many hardships as he had to travel great distances and was absent from home for a considerable time. Many of the farmers lived such a distance away that it was almost impossible to visit them.

## LAND.

I have already pointed out that the farming community comprised the greater bulk of the European population in the Colony. It was composed of three classes, the wine, the corn and the stock farmers. I shall now give an account of each class; not only were their pursuits different but they differed somewhat in type and mode of life. In the introductory chapter I referred to the system of land tenure. Most of the farms occupied by the wine farmers were held in freehold, that is, the title gave full ownership to the ground which could be alienated or disposed of in whatever way the owner thought best. These grants were sometimes subject to certain



servitudes, such as the right of way or as previously mentioned, the obligation of the owner to plant oaks. Many of the corn farmers also held their places on the same system, but the stock-farmers occupied theirs on "loan" or on quitrent. The stock-farmers were only lessees and could move forward to another area if the lease was not renewed or their pasturage gave out. Their movements were towards the north-west, north-east, across the Karoo and along the south-east coast and finally into what are now the Midlands and Eastern Province.

In the early days of the Cape land was assigned without a survey being made, but before the close of the seventeenth century a land register was established and every title deed was accompanied by a diagram. The diagram was prepared by a surveyor, but neither survey nor diagram was subject to any examination. The inaccuracy of the diagram often led to lawsuits. To settle boundary disputes the aggrieved party summoned the adverse party to appear before the Board of Landdrost and Heemraden and show cause why a commission should not be granted to inspect and report upon the matter in dispute. The applicant deposited the amount of the costs of such a commission and when granted notice was issued to the interested parties and neighbours. The parties and their witnesses were heard on the spot — the cause of the dispute. The commission, which generally consisted of the Landdrost, two Heemraden, the Secretary and Sworn Surveyor, reported to the full Board which gave judgment. Beacons had to be fixed to show the boundaries and an old law laid down the death penalty for those found removing another man's beacons. Often a title deed was issued after the farmer had occupied the land for about a generation under a written permission. Sometimes the farmer died, sold the property or removed from it in which case the title was issued in the name of the occupier when the survey was made.

In the case of a "loan" farm the occupier only received a written permission to occupy the land subject to the rights of his neighbours. The extent of his farm was measured by choosing a central spot called the "ordonnantie," generally a spring of water close by to which he intended to build his house, and riding from here on horseback at a walk a half an hour's distance in all directions. This gave an area of approximately three thousand morgen.

#### ENCLOSURES.

The lands of the wine and corn farmers were not enclosed but the former bordered their orchards or vineyards close to the homestead with oaks or shady trees. The clause in the title deed, compelling the owner to plant oaks, was not rigidly observed after the first decade of the century. The farmers of Stellenbosch and Drakenstein said that they had only sixty morgen, or one hundred and twenty acres, of land which did not give them enough space for tree planting, and that the trees harboured the birds which greatly damaged the vineyards, orchards and cornfields.

#### YEARLY ROUTINE.

The yearly routine of the wine farmer embraced the following activities: In February he began cutting his grapes and pressing them into wine, in August he pruned the vines and the next month the vineyards were manured and dug over, in October they were hoed. The vines were not trellised but grew like low spreading bushes. The work of digging and cleaning the ground, pruning and gathering the grapes was done by slave labour under the superintendence of Europeans. In the month of April the corn farmer began to manure his lands and the next month to plough if the rains had fallen and the ground was soft. June and July were the months for sowing when the ground was harrowed and new ground broken



up. Harvesting was carried on during November and December and in January the grain was threshed. Slaves also supplied the labour.

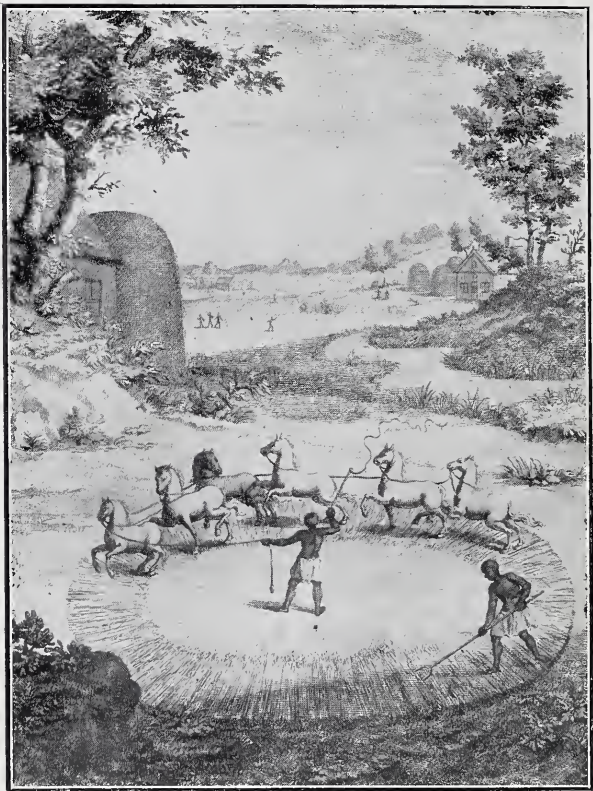
#### PLOUGHING, REAPING, THRESHING.

The plough used at the Cape differed somewhat from that used in Europe. The two wheels were not the same size, the bigger one ran in the furrow previously made and the smaller one went over the smooth ground. Only one handle helped to steady it and the plough knife was bent only on one side, the other being straight. As a rule, eight, ten or more oxen were used to draw the plough and the services of three men were necessary, the ploughman, the driver and the leader. The oxen pulled by the strength of their necks over which the yoke was placed.

The grain was reaped with sickles by the slaves and Hottentots and packed in stacks of twenty or thirty feet high, the top being covered with straw to keep off the wet. The farmer did not store it in barns as in Europe as this was really unnecessary for it seldom rained during December to March. The expense of putting up such protection was also a consideration. The mode of threshing corn was different from that in Holland where the grain was forced out of the ear by strong arms with the striking flail. At the Cape it was tramped out by oxen or horses. The "dorsvloer," which was not far from the homestead, was enclosed with a low circular mud wall, the floor was level and made of clay and cow dung mixed with water, or anthills moistened and beaten down with a flat plank. This became as hard as stone and was little affected by the sun. The sheaves were spread over the floor and a number of horses or oxen driven round and round in the enclosure and kept moving on by a man in the centre with a long whip. Sheaves were constantly thrown on until the animals became tired. The grain was then thrown up in the wind, by a wooden shovel; this separated the chaff and blew it to one side. The chaff



Method of ploughing and plough used.



Early method of threshing corn.

and fine straw, when mixed with barley or oats, were used as fodder for the horses. 83 18

#### OPGAAF.

Every year the government appointed Commissioners to take a census of the people and their effects. Each farmer had to give on oath a return of all the members of his family, servants, number of cattle and small stock, the number of muids of grain sown and won, etc. Upon the latter he paid a tenth as tax into the Company's treasury. But these returns were often inexact as the people alleged that the claim was unjust. They were thus tempted to evade full payment by making false returns. But a change was made later on in the century when the tithes were only demanded upon grain which passed the barrier into Cape Town.

#### HOUSES.

The houses of the wine and corn farmers were substantially built and contained many and spacious rooms. Several were not unlike the town residences in size and were just as elegantly furnished with solid and massive articles. The wine farmer's home nestled amongst the shady oaks and beside running streams, and from those that still exist we can draw a vivid picture of the homestead of the eighteenth century. The architecture was simple but effective and the many beautiful gables in the districts of Paarl and Stellenbosch to-day testify that the early owners had a taste for the aesthetic. Both in the town and the country houses the builders adapted their traditional architecture, which they had learnt in Holland, to the new conditions in which they found themselves here, and built with the materials at hand. This produced an original development, and, consequently a new style of architecture came into practice.

The plan of the country house was shaped like the letter "H," and that of the Cape Peninsula like the

letter "U." The gables made a distinctive feature of these houses and their design was like some seen in Holland and Belgium. The early Cape craftsman designed his gables as near to what he remembered in his own country. In the "H" type of home an elaborate gable was built over the front entrance with more simple ones at the sides or back. The thatched roof was common in the country and long after the houses in Cape Town were built with flat roofs the thatch prevailed outside of the Peninsula. On all the wine farms and many of the corn farms was a slave bell between two tall masoned pillars; this was used for calling the slaves to and from their labour. The custom of ringing a bell was almost as old as the European settlement.

On the corn farms the houses were also substantial and commodious and had a number of outbuildings on the "werf" or yard to meet every requirement of the owner who lived some distance from his neighbours. There were stables paved with round cobbles, coach house, chaff house, granary, fowl house, slaves' quarters and, as a rule, workshops including a smith's shop. All these were enclosed with a low whitewashed wall and in front of the house grew a few shady trees. The whole gave the appearance of a small village. A little distance away was a low walled enclosure which was the family burial place and was found on most farms.

#### ✓ THE STOCKFARMER'S HOME.

The life of the grazier on the borders of the Colony and in the Karoo was very different indeed in his home and mode of living to the other two classes of farmers. His home was small, consisting very often of no more than two or three rooms, and furnished only with bare necessities. Many had no fixed dwelling as they lived a nomadic life, moving with their cattle from one pasturage to another. Such lived in their tented wagons which carried their whole household effects. For bedsteads or





A corn farmer's homestead.



A corn farm along the Berg River, about 1778.



couches for the women-folk at night there were "katels" or wooden frames across which leather thongs were placed; the men, covered by a kaross, slept under the canopy of heaven.

There was always sufficient building material to erect a suitable house. The farmers nearer the sea coast could obtain lime by burning the sea-shells and found plenty of timber for beams and supports. Those further away could make lime by burning the limestone and where this was wanting clay could be found. In many parts of the country there was good stone which could be quarried. In other areas unburnt bricks were used which became hardened in time by the excessive heat of the sun.

Many houses had no ceiling and through the bare rafters the thatch roof was seen. It was no uncommon thing for the farmer to keep a ready-made coffin or two supported over these rafters so that in case of death no delay was occasioned. These coffins, often the storing place for dried fruits, were sold to neighbours in cases of emergency. Those who moved from place to place built themselves a temporary dwelling. This consisted of a wattle and daub hut built after the fashion of the natives — a hartebeesthuis. The walls consisted of a palisade filled in with thatch and covered over inside and outside with mud.

Each farmer was his own architect and he had slaves and Hottentots as labourers to assist him. In those parts where little timber grew trees, like the mimosa, had to take its place. The floors of these houses were made of hardened clay and washed frequently with a mixture of water and cow-dung which kept them cool and free from vermin.

The homes of the stock-farmers were situated at great distances from each other and still much further from the nearest court of law and church. This isolation created several characteristics in these people, they became independent, self reliant, conservative and were

thrown upon their own resources. The system of land tenure under which they held their farms helped to quicken the spirit of moving from one centre to another and to disperse them rapidly over the whole country. Their isolation cut them off a great deal from the civilization of the more settled area. Their daily life would have become monotonous had not the frequent raids made by the marauding Bushmen kept them constantly on the watch. As they received no military protection from the Company they banded themselves into small commandos for their mutual defence and went out Bushman hunting. The story of these border farmers is practically one of a constant conflict between themselves and the Bushmen. It was a case of either one or the other being master of the territory. It frequently happened that when the farmer had to leave his home to go to his annual military training, to church or on business to the nearest village, he returned some weeks later to find his wife and family murdered, his house in ashes, and his cattle stolen.

#### EDUCATION.

The farmers in the Colony had little opportunity to educate their children. Those living near the capital or the villages had greater advantages in this respect than their less fortunate fellow-colonists who resided several days and even weeks away. There were no schools in the interior and farmers who could afford it engaged discharged soldiers or men still in the Company's service who were loaned to them for a short period. The character of these itinerant teachers was not always everything that could be desired and they themselves had a very elementary education. They were given board, lodging and a small salary and were often employed in assisting the farmer on the land. The education they had to impart was to enable their pupils to read the bible, the psalms and the catechism in order to pass the test for church membership. The lack of education re-



A farm on the Karoo.



tarded the general progress of the country. The intellect and ability were there but only wanted the means of development.

#### RELIGION.

The people of the Cape Colony were on the whole a religious people. There were times when those who lived some distance from a church had become lax in attending divine service; in fact, at one period a high placed official likened them to heathens. Could this be otherwise when, in some cases, it took two or more weeks to reach a church? Apart from the inconvenience which this entailed there was the danger which the farm and its inmates ran from marauding natives. But the establishment in 1743 and 1745 of two more churches gave the far off farmers a better opportunity to attend divine service.

Farmers who were elected as church officers were expected to attend with some regularity and many of them would travel six or seven hours by cart to be present on Sunday. But those who lived one hundred to two hundred miles away attended at infrequent intervals. Distances were great in those days of slow travelling and sometimes a farmer took a week or more to come up to the quarterly communion. Notwithstanding the obstacles to come to church the community was pious and God-fearing. The grazier was regular in holding family worship both morning and evening and said grace with devoutness before and after meat. The bible, the great guide in the farmer's life, was frequently the only literature in his home; he was well acquainted and could discourse about the lives of the patriarchs of old of which he was a fair prototype. He lived under the same heavenly canopy as did these men and carried on the same occupation as many had done before. With his experiences of life he felt like them and could thus appreciate to the full extent the biblical story of their wanderings.

It was seldom that a curse or imprecation of any kind was heard to fall from the mouth of these people and this was no doubt due to their universal religious mind and extreme seclusion from the outer world. This religious fervour kept the farmers from sinking to the lowness of the natives with whom they came in daily contact, and the seclusion withheld them from the temptations of many vices. Living as they did in isolation and surrounded by Hottentots and Bushmen there was a temptation, to some extent, to imitate the mode of life of these people. That there were some who had perhaps fallen away from the European mode of living cannot be denied but on the whole the border farmers lived with a true sense of decorum.

#### HOSPITALITY.

The Cape people were well known for their hospitality especially in the country districts. No stranger, of whatever nationality he was, had to fear that he would be turned away when he knocked at the farm door and sought shelter or food. A traveller was always welcomed and offered whatever accommodation and lodging could be given, and his horses taken charge of and fed by one of the servants. Payment was never asked nor received for such hospitality; if offered to the owner it was considered an insult. Those who lived close to the main road were frequently entertaining such guests, and to pass the homestead without stopping to greet the farmer and partake of a drink of coffee or tea was considered an affront. Every traveller, of whatever nationality, who has recorded his trip through the country, has praised loudly the kindnesses shown him.

#### TACITURNITY.

Travellers have complained of the taciturnity of these people who would sit for hours without speaking many words. An occasional yes or no was often advanced dur-

ing a conversation but when it drifted to matters relating to farming interests, the weather, crops, cattle, the various kinds of game, themselves or relations, the church or the last sermon heard then the host was a good conversationalist. The lack of conversation on matters pertaining to the latest European news or to the outer world generally was merely the result of ignorance. It was the consequence of the absolutely isolated life led and the very little reading indulged in. The only book read and known thoroughly was the Holy Bible, and it would have surprised the visitor if the farmer had begun conversing on the various biblical characters, particularly the patriarchs of old. In some parts, as in the district of Swellendam, many of the farmers were lively in their conversation and were even witty.

#### FAMILY TIES.

The bonds of family relationship were very strong among the whole community of the Cape people. Every respect and affection were shown to blood relations or those connected by the ties of marriage. However far distant in degree the relationship was the term "cousin" was used in addressing each other. Deep respect was shown to the elders by the younger generation and the former were usually addressed by the term of Uncle So and So, and Aunt So and So, even though there was no relationship whatsoever.

Most of the families had a wide circle of relations and, although living far apart, exchanged visits constantly. Once a year a farmer would pack his wagon with requirements for a trip of a month or six weeks and take half his household or more to visit these relations. When the father or mother of a grown-up family celebrated their birthdays their children, grandchildren and other connections made it a duty to assemble at the old home to congratulate them and partake of a large feast prepared for the occasion. At this meal a roasted



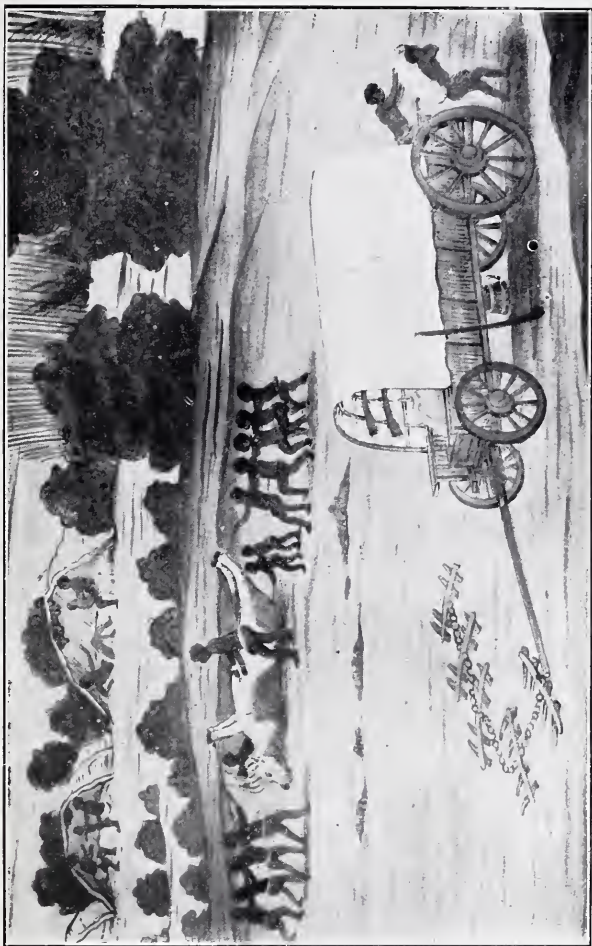
sucking pig, with a potato or an orange in its mouth, was one of the dishes seldom missed. These visits often entailed travelling for many days in an ox wagon, and kept the link of relationship strongly bound.

#### TRAVELLING.

Travelling in the Colony during the eighteenth century was no mean undertaking. There was no public diligence, each one travelled in his own conveyance or that of a friend. Nearer the capital the farmers travelled in light carts, wagonettes, chaises or rode on horseback. The general means of transport was, however, the ox-wagon. The making of wagons and carts was the only important industry of the country. The South African ox-wagon was a vehicle which combined strength and flexibility and without it the expansion of the Colony over the first mountain barriers would have been very slow indeed. It was made of well-seasoned hard indigenous wood and was so constructed that when drawn over difficult and stony roads answered well to the uneven route owing to its elasticity. It was covered with a tent which afforded protection to the traveller by day and night; under this tent the farmer could store light pieces of furniture and one or two "katels."

There were no bridges throughout the whole country; one or two of the large rivers, as the Berg and the Breede, were crossed by pontoons. None of the rivers were navigable or capable of being used as canals. The offer of two enterprising farmers to bridge the Berg River at their own cost was rejected by the government because it was thought that it would injure the pontoon-keeper.

There were practically no roads to speak of and such as there were were beaten tracks over the hard soil of the Karoo. The highways, within about a radius of fifty miles of the capital, were kept in order by the inhabitants as a contribution to the district treasury. The greatest



A South African Wagon.



trial of the traveller was to traverse the several mountain ranges and this was undertaken at some risk to man and beast. The tracks over the Hottentots-Holland Range or the Outeniquas, for instance, involved long, tedious and dangerous journeys. They were strewn with loose stones and, here and there, obstructed by boulders. By patience, determination and intrepidity the early travellers managed to pass over, sometimes unloading the wagon and transporting the goods on the backs of the oxen or sometimes hauling a half-loaded wagon up with ropes whilst the driver lashed and hallooed to the oxen, while the wagon was held back by ropes on the descent to prevent it toppling over the side.

A team of a dozen to sixteen or more oxen were required to draw a wagon over these passes. On a long journey a farmer generally provided himself with a number of spare oxen to take the place of those which died along the way or were devoured by wild animals or stolen by Bushmen. He took four or five Hottentots with him, three of whom were generally armed to watch the cattle while grazing and protect them from theft or wild animals.

The driver was provided with a long tapering bamboo about fourteen or fifteen feet long with a lash slightly longer — a two handed whip, — which he used with great dexterity and was able to flick any of the oxen on any part he desired. When driving a team of six or eight horses the same dexterity was shown by the Hottentot or Malay driver who managed the reins with one hand and used the long whip with the other. These drivers were perfect masters of their team and were as capable as any coachman in Europe. They drove rapidly over precipices and turned corners with the greatest dexterity, seldom causing an accident. X

A journey of four or five hundred miles took the traveller six weeks or longer and he travelled during the cool of the night or early morning

and rested his animals during the excessive heat of the day. While the ox was a slow animal, the average rate of travelling being about three miles an hour, and by cart and horse six miles an hour, it was indispensable as a draught animal. In South Africa the distance between two places was spoken of as so many hours. An hour on the road was reckoned equal to the distance to which a man could ride at a round trot or a hand gallop and also the distance a man could drive an ox wagon in two hours. This was six miles. In a country such as South Africa, where the pasturage was scanty, often very poor, and water scarce, the ox could subsist better than any other animal. It was, therefore, more useful for these long journeys than the horse for which fine and nourishing fodder had to be found. Sometimes the oxen while yet calves were tamed and broken in for use as saddle oxen and pack oxen. A hole was bored through the gristle of the nose large enough to hold a wooden pin to both ends of which a rope was fastened that served as a bit and bridle to guide the animal. The saddle was made of a sheep skin folded up together and fastened by a rope round the fore part of the ox.

Very often flooded rivers came down in torrents after heavy rains and retarded the progress of the traveller who was frequently obliged to wait for days on the banks for the water to subside. To attempt to cross it while in flood was seeking certain death to man and beast and the loss of all belongings. In the drifts or fords of the rivers the waggons often got stuck and then there were much shouting at and lashing of the oxen.

On ascending steep hills the drivers let the oxen rest now and again for a minute or two. On the descent one or both the hind wheels were locked by winding a chain, fastened to the forepart of the wagon, round some of the fellies of the hind wheels and then hooking into one of the links the hook that hung to the other end of the chain. Both hind wheels, and sometimes a front one,

were locked as a rule when going down very steep declines, especially during wet weather when the road was very slippery. In default of such a dragchain the wheel was lashed fast to the seat of the wagon; to prevent the lowest fellies and the iron work round it being worn out a kind of sledge carriage, called a "lockshoe," hollowed out in the inside, was fitted to it. This lockshoe, or as the Dutch called it "remschoen," was a great destroyer of the roads as can well be imagined and during the next century was the bugbear of the road engineer.

Such were the difficulties experienced by the people living beyond the first mountain range who wished to go to the nearest village or to Cape Town. The long journeys were not, however, frequently undertaken. The lack of good roads and mountain passes retarded the agricultural progress of the country and with the restricted trade at the capital the farmer found it often impracticable to bring his produce to market. The difficulties of transport rendered a fusion of the different elements of society impossible. Easy means of locomotion would have been a benefit to the people morally, intellectually as well as materially and would have further helped to bind the people together.

The distance to Cape Town from the furthest village before Graaff-Reinet town was established in 1786 was a great obstacle to those who had complaints to make before the Courts of Justice. If a man was summoned and failed to appear before the court there was little force in compelling him to come up owing to the great expense involved. If he wanted to execute his last will or pass a notarial document he had to go to the District Secretary or to Cape Town. Those who desired to enter matrimony were obliged to travel up to Cape Town to appear before the Matrimonial Court.

Many of the farmers of the interior only visited Cape Town on these rare occasions, others made a visit once a year or every two or three years bringing with them



butter, tallow, soap and hides for disposal and with the money bought ammunition, coffee, tea, sugar, cloth and other necessities of life. Sometimes a farmer in the south-west loaded his wagon with fresh and dried fruit and travelled to the north-west or the Karoo and bartered his produce for sheep or cattle. On these long journeys he kept his pot filled by shooting game which was found in abundance. With all the trials and dangers of travelling in this country there was one danger from which the wayfarer was free and that was attack from a highwayman.

#### DOMESTIC LIFE.

The domestic life of the frontier farmers was very simple indeed. The wine and corn farmers, being in closer touch with the capital, were more within the reach of civilising influences. While some lived like their more distant fellow colonists, the majority were in comfortable circumstances, were clothed better and might be described as the country gentry of the Colony. At the Cape there was no social class distinction as was commonly found in Europe. Except for the right of precedence in public functions and general gatherings, there was a feeling of equality amongst the whole community. The richest and the poorest freely intermingled with each other and sat down to table side by side.

The furniture, crockery and other articles of domestic use of these country gentlemen were in many instances as good as that found in the house of the townsman of the same wealth. They possessed numerous slaves and each home had three or more of these servants who were good musicians and could play the violin well by ear. These violinists were frequently called in to play a discourse of music to which the farmer, his family and friends danced. It is difficult to show exactly the differences in life in the various areas of the country, but



there were certainly differences in mode of living and character. The three types of farmers are described only in a broad sense. Some of the corn farmers, for instance, were no better than the grazier who had not all their advantages. Circumstances compelled the latter type to live and dress as he did although he was exactly of the same stock as the other two types. The inventories of household effects of the three types show how vastly differently they lived and the extent of their wealth.

#### HOUSEHOLD ARTICLES.

Living in isolation in the interior, the stock-farmer learnt to dispense with a great many comforts and articles of household furniture. His wardrobe contained just sufficient clothing for his absolute requirements and much of this, like the larger pieces of furniture, was home made. The tables, chairs and "katels" or bedsteads were made of indigenous hard wood, such as stinkwood and yellow wood. The bottoms of the chairs and "katels" were made of thongs of raw hide in place of cane. Instead of woollen blankets fur karosses, made from the skins of wild animals, were used and feather beds in place of hair mattresses. While some possessed porcelain and earthenware articles a great number were satisfied with pewter ones. This was quite natural since the long distances that such articles had to be transported rendered them liable to be broken over the rough and uneven roads. Calabashes were often substituted for cups and basins and they made good receptacles for keeping milk in.

In many of the lists of the effects of these people we find no forks or knives mentioned but spoons evidently took their place as reference is frequently made to these. Several travellers have remarked on the want of these articles, but they have only seen the homes of the less wealthy. It is difficult to accept their statements as applying to all the frontier farmers. There is no doubt

that many did live in a manner which would have shocked the more enlightened and educated but is there a country where this type is not found? To-day we cannot judge a whole community by drawing our conclusions from observing only a few examples.

In 1752 a farmer living in the south-west possessed ninety-six head of cattle, a thousand sheep and ten horses, and had amongst a few other household articles six cups and saucers, three dishes, eight plates, all of porcelain, three dishes, four plates and six spoons of pewter, but no mention is made of knives and forks. In 1779 a farmer who had two farms much further afield — one in the Long Kloof and another between the Gamtoos and Sundays Rivers—had four hundred and thirty-four cattle, two thousand and seventy-four sheep and twenty-three horses, and amongst the various articles of domestic use were three dozen porcelain plates, one dozen and a half cups and saucers, one pewter spoon, six steel forks and seven earthenware dishes. No reference is made to any table knives. No doubt the statement by a well known traveller that “each guest had to bring his own knife” had some truth in it, but when he writes that “for forks the fingers were used” it would require further investigation to confirm the truth of this. The men usually made use of their pocket-knife for cutting up their food.

In every farm-house were found two or more guns, no farmer was without this necessary weapon to defend his home from the Bushmen or to supply his table with game. Gunpowder and lead were indispensable to him and these with his gun he would not be without; with them he was more than a match for the natives and the carnivora.

The stock-farmer, who was constantly on the move, would naturally live in a ruder manner. His home would be one which could be easily and rapidly constructed of poles, spars and reeds and was sparsely furnished. Those who had no fixed habitation but travelled from one

pasturage to another in their tented wagon would not be burdened with many articles, they would have only such as were considered absolutely necessary. To them a wagon was an absolute necessity.

#### DRESS.

Away from the more settled parts of the Colony a difference was noticed in the material and style of the clothes. The wine farmer and many of the corn farmers dressed almost like the townsman. But the majority of the farmers wore home-made clothes. The tanned hides of small animals were made into coats, vests, breeches and footwear. The latter known as "veldschoens" had no heel and were modelled at first from the leather sandals worn by the Hottentots. They were tied by brass buckles and were most comfortable; to-day they are still in common use in many parts. The broad brimmed hats were made from the palmiet (*juncus serratus*). Many farmers discarded socks and underclothing. In some parts they wore clothes of coarse cloth, coarse woollen stockings and a blue calico shirt, a cotton handkerchief round the neck took the place of the stock and cravat. The women wore self made gowns of prints and cotton and covered their heads with thick quilled caps tied with two broad flaps under the chin and fell behind across the shoulders. "A plain close cap and a coarse cotton gown, virtue and good housewifery, are looked upon by the fair sex as sufficient ornaments for their persons."

#### DAILY LIFE.

Each day in the life of the farmer was about the same but it differed in some degree from that of the citizen of Cape Town. The farmer watched the growth of his crops and the increase of his stock, the townsman calculated the cost and sale prices of his merchandise and reckoned up his day's takings. All spheres of work may be considered monotonous if no interest is shown in them,

but the busy time which the farmer had when his crops ripened or his flocks increased gave him little opportunity to think of monotony. That there was a sameness in his life was natural, he lived independently in isolation and had little to break the dullness. Now and again a Bushman raid gave him sufficient excitement to prevent his life seeming too drab.

At daybreak the household began to stir and after partaking of a cup of coffee or tea family prayers were held and a psalm sung. As the sun rose each one was away on the lands or amongst the sheep and cattle attending to his various duties. Breakfast was a couple of hours later and at noon dinner was served after which all retired to their rooms, which were generally darkened by the inside shutters to keep the flies and heat out, and slept for an hour or two. This was a custom throughout the country and was found to have a refreshing effect especially during the heat of the summer. At meal times a servant stood by gently waving a green branch, a whisk of peacock or ostrich feathers to keep the flies away from the food.

Watches were not in the possession of all the males on the farm but the sun was the best timepiece and everyone worked with regularity and instinctively arranged his work in such a manner that as the sun began to dip in the west the cattle and sheep had been kraaled, the cows milked and all the animals attended to. The Cape cows did not give as much milk as those in Europe and before they allowed themselves to be milked their calves had first to suck a while. It was the practice then as to-day to tie the hind legs of the cow before milking. One by one the members of the family wended their way homewards and gathered in the living room which served for all purposes when they came together.

In one corner of the room stood a tub of clean water into which those who wanted a drink dipped a tin pot or the lower half of a calabash. In the other corner was



Types of dress worn by farmers, last quarter of 18th century.



Types of dress worn by farmers, last quarter of 18th century.



a table upon which stood a pot of tea or coffee upon a confor from which a drink of these beverages could be obtained throughout the day. At this table the housewife sat during the day dispensing the drinks. She rested her feet upon a footwarmer which, during the winter, had burning charcoal in it. On the wall hung a couple of muskets and powder horns.

When everyone had come in a slave or Hottentot servant entered with a tub of water and set it down before the master who discarded his veldschoens and placed his feet in to be washed. This was repeated to each member, including the visitors, the servant going to each one according to seniority. Family worship was conducted before or after supper when the domestic servants came in and joined in the devotions. Grace before and after meals was never forgotten. The prayer was simple and uttered with the greatest reverence. The Grace before meals was: "Zegen, Heer, hetgeen wij eten. Laat ons nimmer u vergeten"; the Grace after meals was: "Heer, voor spijs en drank, zeggen wij u hartlik dank, van nu aan tot in den eeuwigheid."

About nine o'clock everyone had retired to rest. In many of the homes the sleeping apartments were few and often several persons shared the same room. The slave girls who worked in the house frequently slept in the kitchen and cleared out early next morning before anyone was astir. In many homes throughout the Colony the slave nurses slept at the door of the mistress' bedroom. Letters were confided to the care of a friend or the driver of a wagon, as there was no postal service in the country at this time.

#### VENDUES OR PUBLIC SALES.

The daily life of the Cape people was frequently enlivened when a sale by public auction was announced and held. Public sales were held either under a legal process or when the inhabitants wished to sell their effects



voluntarily. It was sometimes more advantageous to dispose of goods by public auction than out of hand.

Sales were advertised a few weeks before by having notices posted in places where the people usually congregated. On the day of the sale the auctioneer's assistant went round the town or village an hour before with a gong. At the cross streets he sounded this and made the necessary announcement. The public were not slow in taking advantage of the forthcoming event for as a rule they attended in large numbers. Bargains were as a rule to be picked up and the inducement of free wine and tobacco, no doubt attracted many, even those who had no intention of buying. Both public and private sales were the occasions of congenial gatherings. Thus the people were noted for their passion for public auctions. In the country, particularly on a farm, the entertainment covered free meals and often lodging as well. The hot meals frequently included a dish of yellow rice and raisins, so much liked by South Africans. This rice in course of time, was known as "Vendutie rys," or "Vendue rice." This idea no doubt originated in the same way as "begrafenis rys" served at a funeral repast. Less than a century ago the announcement of a sale stated that not only would there be a good glass of wine, with lots of brandy and plenty of tea and coffee for the ladies but "last, and not least, a dance in the evening, accompanied by a band of music which will be brought from Cape Town expressly for the occasion." The free drinks were probably given, as a writer has observed, to give the purchasers more confidence. The records disclose expenses for refreshments at sales and show that beer, wine, tea, coffee, cakes, and bread and cheese were provided.

Public sales or vendues were conducted by certain Government officials who were the only auctioneers permitted. The method of selling immovables at such sales differed somewhat to that of other countries. The pro-



Farmer's wife, western part of Colony, last quarter of 18th century.



perty was first of all sold by *opslag*, advance bidding, and then put up again and sold by *afslag*, or downward bidding. The bidder in the first instance did not intend to make the purchase, but rather to increase the final sum. For this service, he received a bonus or, as it was called, *strykgeld*. If on the downward bidding no more was offered than the price he bid, he was obliged to take the property. This risk was, however, negligible, and there was many a one who made a reasonable income by attending such sales regularly and receiving *strykgeld*. Advertisements of sales invariably stated that "liberal *strykgeld*" would be given, which naturally tended to bring many to the sale and also enhanced the purchase price. The auctioneer now put up the property by the *afslag*, and inquired whether anyone would make an offer — stating the sum, which was generally double the amount first bid. No offer being accepted, he would lower the figure gradually until a purchaser shouted out "Mine!" when the bargain was closed. This price was usually 50, 100, or 150 *rixdollars* or *guldens* more than the *opslag* price. Before the bargain was closed, the auctioneer shouted "Going once," "Going twice," "Going for the third time," whereupon he clapped the palms of his hands together, as a sign that the deal was closed. In case two persons cried out "Mine!" simultaneously, the opinion was taken of the majority of the bystanders as to who the purchaser was. Purchasers were allowed six weeks' credit, and received from the auctioneer a "Vendubrief" or specified account of the goods bought.

Slaves were announced for sale in the same advertisements as goods and chattels, and we read of a house, household furniture, animals and slaves all being enumerated together. Before being sold, each slave mounted a table, and was closely inspected by would-be purchasers in the same manner as they would examine a horse or a cow. He was pinched, punched, made to jump, show his teeth and tongue to indicate that he was sound in wind

and limb. Scars from flogging on the back of the slave were also carefully noted, and every item of information that the owner cared to give was obtained.

### RECREATIONS.

The recreations of the people living beyond the capital were few. Where farms were within easy distance of each other dancing was one of the few social amusements indulged in by the country people. Hunting was an outdoor amusement enjoyed by all who had the time and opportunity. No better shots with the gun than the Cape people could be found; the dexterity with which the mounted hunters dismounted loaded and primed their guns, aimed and fired, surprised travellers from Europe. Not only were they swift in action but also accurate in aim. The men were frequently in the saddle hunting buck, the flesh of which they used largely for their meat diet. The young lads learnt to ride and shoot at an early age and soon became as expert as their fathers.

New Year was one of the principal feast days of the South African people. This was the occasion for dancing, singing and games, and where farms were within easy reach neighbours rode on horseback to each other's farms to participate in the festivities. In the country the New Year was ushered in by firing off salvos from small cannon, guns or pistols, a practice which had been prohibited in the town owing to the danger of fire. This took place at midnight and was the survival of the old Dutch custom "shooting the Old Year out." When an important official paid a visit to the country people he was met at the outskirts of the village by a commando of horsemen and escorted in state. They greeted him by a discharge of firearms in the air.

### Food.

In the interior mutton was almost always seen at every meal, and was served up swimming in a gravy of sheep's

fat. In the drier parts vegetables were not infrequently absent from the diet. There was plenty of game at the time the first comers arrived, but as this began to diminish the farmer sought his food from his flocks. The mutton was as good as could be found anywhere; frequently a sheep was killed in the early morning and without allowing the flesh to cool parts of it were served for breakfast. All the country people could make good pastries and cakes, fruit preserves and pickles.

#### HOMEMADE ARTICLES.

The farming community were frequently thrown upon their own resources and manufactured various necessary articles. Nearly every household made its own soap and candles and was able sometimes to send these articles to Cape Town for sale when its requirements had been satisfied. For the manufacture of the soap a shrub called the gannabosch (*salsola aphylla*) was used by burning it to ash from which lye was boiled. The lye was mixed with animal fat and boiled for about four or five days, care was taken to stir it now and again. Finally the soap was separated from the lye, melted in another pot and afterwards put into a form. The farmers made their own candles from the fat of the sheep. One kind, "vormkers," was made simply by pouring the melted fat into a tin mould through the centre of which was stretched a wick. Another sort, "waterkers," or dipped tallow candle, was made by dipping the wick alternately in the molten fat and in cold water. This resulted in long tapering candles. Where the wax plant was obtainable it was utilised for hardening the tallow used for candles.

In those parts where the sugarbush or species of protea abounded the sweet watery liquor, which filled the flower during its inflorescence, was collected and prepared by inspissation into a delicious syrup known as "Boschjesstroop." Ladders were made from bamboo where this was found and brooms from reeds were used. Instead

of cordage the farmer generally used leather which was durable and easy to prepare from the raw hide of the ox. The fresh flayed oxhide was cut into thongs in length, thickness and breadth, according to the use it was to be put. The thongs, after being soaked in lye for twenty-four hours, were joined together to form the required length and then thrown over a sort of gallows and a weight, from eighty to a hundred pounds fastened to it to keep it down. Two slaves, with a stick between the leather, kept drawing it backwards and forwards and turned it constantly round and round, so that the weight bore evenly upon the leather. This changing from place to place soon dried it and without further preparation it was ready for use.

#### HEALTH. — REMEDIES IN ILLNESS.

It can be said without fear of contradiction that on the whole the people of South Africa were healthy and seldom required the services of a physician. In proportion to the number of the population there was comparatively little illness and this was no doubt due to the pure air in which they lived, the food which they ate and the open air life which they led. Not only near the town and village but also throughout the country great faith was placed in homœopathic remedies. Usually every household was provided with a "Huis Apotheek," or a box of Halle Medicines which was in much repute here. So great was the faith in these remedies that only in extreme cases was the aid of a physician sought. Even when his services were required the distance that he lived was so great that the patient would probably have succumbed before his arrival if home remedies were not tried. The wife, or one of the elderly matrons, was generally well acquainted with the use of the medicines and from them help was looked for. This threw the country people upon their own resources, and they learnt not



only the use of the homœopathic medicines but also the medicinal properties of many of the indigenous plants and herbs.

Several of the first aid remedies used for restoratives were the same as in Holland. Vinegar or lavender water was rubbed on the temples of the patient who was made to inhale the smell of it, and was given to drink harts-horn in a little wine. The colonists had learnt from the Hottentots the use of many of the herbs; these were given as purgatives, emetics, cathartics and diuretics. A plant most commonly used was the buchu. When preserved in brandy it was good for stomachic complaints, and when in vinegar, as an embrocation in rheumatic pains or for sprains and contusions. The Hottentots placed great faith in the use of *Buchu Asyn* (Buchu Vinegar) as a wash to cleanse and heal a wound. This antiseptic was made by putting the leaves of the buchu into a bottle of cold vinegar and allowing them to steep. The longer they were left to infuse the more efficacious the vinegar became. In sandy tracts of the Colony where the Hottentots fig, *Mesembryanthemum Acin Aciforme* Lin, was found, few other plants were so common in domestic use as this. The juice from the succulent leaves was taken internally to check dysentery and acted as a mild diuretic, it was used as a gargle for malignant sore throat or in the form of a lotion in burns and scalds. An old Hottentot remedy was the use of the Davidsworteltje which in the form of a decoction acted simultaneously as an emetic, cathartic and diuretic, and the tincture or infusion of the root in wine or brandy was a powerful emetic and purgative. The tops of branches of the rhenosterboschjes, which covered immense tracts of land in the western districts, when infused in wine or brandy gave a good stomachic bitters and was frequently used as a tonic in dyspepsia. The "boschjes stroop" made from the sugar bush was considered a good cure for a cough or pulmonary affections.

Some believed in cures from the blood, the urine, the excrement, the fat, the skin and flesh of animals. Though it might seem incredible there are country places to-day where the people have faith in this. Goat fat was used for chest complaints, the excrement of the goat infused was given to a patient to bring out measles. In case of inflammation the patient was wrapped up in the warm skin of a sheep immediately after it was killed. In various parts of the country there were mineral hot springs which had different healing properties; these were visited by people suffering from a variety of illnesses. Many of these waters are to-day much sought after.

## PART IV.

## CONCLUSION.

During the eighteenth century the colonists laid a sound foundation for those who were to establish themselves as an individual people in the following century. The establishment of the Cape merely as a means to an end by the Dutch East India Company restricted any national growth of the people. They owed allegiance to this commercial body and the farmers of the interior knew very little of the constitution of Holland and its relationship to other states except what was told them by the itinerant teachers or their overseers, both of whom were discharged Company's soldiers or given out on loan. The second or third generation of the early settlers had to a great extent lost all connection with relatives in Europe. South Africa was their home and they knew little of other places. The first comers brought with them their national characteristics and their race instinct would have been strong. Climate, occupation and environment in course of time changed this. The French and German element of the population became assimilated to the Dutch in a generation or two.

To give a description of the characteristics of the Cape colonists can only be done in general terms. People differed from each other in particular localities, those in the town lived, dressed and earned their livelihood in a different manner from those who carried on farming near the capital, whilst those living far inland were in many respects unlike both of these. The first type existed in an atmosphere of commercialism amidst the activities of the Company. The citizens bought, sold, bartered and

learnt all the traits peculiar to a commercial life. The farmers near Cape Town lived a peaceful, self-satisfied existence amongst beautiful mountains, running streams and wooded localities. The third type had many obstacles to contend with, wild animals, drought and Bushmen. Their occupation and environment helped to form some of the characteristics which became more evident in the generation a hundred years later.

The mode of life, the manner of dressing and the degree of education of the colonists varied according to the distance they resided from Cape Town. The educational facilities such as they were, gave those nearer the capital a better opportunity for enlightenment; the contact with those passing to and fro in the ships kept them more in touch with the outer world and gave a certain refinement to their manners. The traveller found the farmers in the west and south-west different from those in the Karoo and the east, and thus the characteristics of each section differed. As instances of this, the north-westerner was more active, moved with more briskness and was less stout and unwieldy than the southerner, probably owing to the more temperate climate. In the west there was a greater distinction between the higher and lower class of inhabitants, between master and servants, both in dress and habits, than in any other part of the Colony. They were more in frequent intercourse with Cape Town and thus obtained a better idea of polished life. A luxury and refinement among the higher classes were introduced. And thus to obtain a true guide to the character and manners of the people each area would have to be analysed.

The indifferent, and in some places lack of, education was responsible for the want of refined touches usually found amongst an educated class. The absence of book learning did not indicate that the people were incapable of comprehending general knowledge had they been given the chance. This they never received but behind the brain

of many of the sons of the soil lay hidden the faculties which generations later were developed. If there had been better opportunities for education and a call made upon the burgher community to take their share in public affairs where brain power was required the call would not have been in vain for many would have risen to the occasion. One or two travellers have done an injustice to the farming community of this period by making little allowance for this want of education, the conditions under which they lived, their infrequent intercourse with each other and particularly the civilizing influences, the constant native wars, the difficulties of transport, the absence of a proper market and the restriction on trade. All these factors aided to retard not only the progress of the individual but of the community at large.

The Cape colonists were religious and their teachings were strictly according to the Bible and the Reformer Calvin. They were looked upon as very pious and though at times the religious state of the community in general fell and rose yet they never forgot their Maker. The Bible was their daily guide in matters of faith, in their daily life, their conversation, in their thoughts and speech. Religion had a deep rooted hold upon them and their trust in God was implicit. This piety had a marvellous effect upon those living inland for it kept them from sinking to the plane of the natives with whom they came in daily contact in a wild and undeveloped country. The strong hold which the principles of religion had upon the people kept them from becoming demoralised. It would have been such an easy matter to have imitated the mode of living of these barbarians. This deep devoutness gave the people, particularly those in the interior, a credulity regarding the supernatural; they were superstitious and believed in "spooks," or spirits, and the working of the devil. They were convinced that localities were haunted and that persons were possessed of devils. Every error or offence was assigned

as the handiwork of the devil; mysterious noises were the voices of spirits. The howling of a dog at night foretold death, the screech of an owl in the loft at night meant ill-luck which also followed the breaking of a mirror. Singing in the right ear of a person denoted that someone was speaking good of him, if in the left ear evil.

It would have been difficult to have found a more hospitable people than those in South Africa. Even those travellers whose criticism in some respects are adverse have given full praise for the hospitality shown. The people were generous where the poor were concerned, no one ever needed to want for a crust of bread and the wayside traveller was never refused a night's lodging and food either for himself, his servants or animals. The abuse of this kindness probably accounted for the cold reception accorded to some, but as a rule the traveller, of whatever nation, was assured of a warm welcome. Those who had suffered financial loss or were anxious to start business were helped by friends or relatives and money was advanced with very little security. Families kept together in money matters and helped each other; a relative was not allowed to sink for the want of financial aid.

The introduction of slavery gave the colonists cheap labour but it was a mixed blessing for in the town no European who owned slaves thought of doing manual labour. The tradesman and craftsman had their work done by slaves and this was the same in the country where the farmer gave orders to his slaves and supervised the work. The slaves were looked upon as the hewers of wood and drawers of water, inferior to the European who cultivated a domineering spirit over this class of the population. Although there were cases of severe treatment of the inferior races yet the slaves were well treated as a whole. Their treatment in South Africa was much better than in most of the slave-owning colonies.

The colonists were conservative and a new idea was only taken up after it had been tried and proved satisfactory by others. A decision, however, once come to, was carried out, there was no turning back.

Independence and a love of liberty were the ideals of the early colonists. These were intensified as they began to move across the mountain barriers seeking new pastures. Their conflicts with wild animals, the Hottentots and Bushmen, their efforts to cultivate the virgin soil under untried conditions made them a brave and hardy people, and laid the foundations of that sturdy race which a hundred years later was undaunted to challenge the might of the British Empire.



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